



CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

*By the Same Author*

**STORIES:**

KINGS OF MERRY ENGLAND

(FROM EDWARD THE CONFESSOR TO RICHARD III)

KING HENRY THE FIFTH

KING RICHARD THE THIRD

**MONOGRAPHS:**

ON SOME BONES IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A DEFENCE OF KING RICHARD III

MOSCATT IN JAMAICA

**PLAYS:**

THE DOCK IS SERVED

THE LITTLE WENCH

THE DOCK BRIDGE IS FALLING

THESE CHANGING THE KING

THE DOCK FOR TWO

THE DOCK IS BURNING

**THE DOCK**

THE DOCK AT BAY







*Photo : Speaight*

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE SIXTH

# CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

*The Coronation of King George VI  
in History and Tradition*

By  
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FOR  
GEOFFREY CURTIS  
IN FRIENDSHIP

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*Gentlemen . . . THE KING!*





## I

### *Gentlemen . . . The King!*

THE world listened to the voice of Prince Edward Windsor, late King of England, on the night of Friday, December 11, 1936. Clearly he spoke, only once did his voice falter at what was obviously a reading slip, and at the conclusion of his few sad words, he cried—"God save the King!" The reign of his brother George VI began that day, at the moment of Edward VIII's abdication, for the King can never die. On the death or abdication of one monarch, his successor reigns; there can be no interregnum. At 11.55 in the night of January 20, 1936, when, not only Britain and its Empire, but all the world lost a man loved and respected, a man who had faced bravely the chaos of a terrible war and had come through, after weaker monarchies had crashed, with greater prestige than ever, at that moment the son of George V, the Prince of Wales, became King Edward VIII. "Le roi est mort, le roi est vif!" the heralds cried in earlier days; they wrenched off their coats and put on new coats, while the officers of the royal household flung their staves into the dead King's tomb. These gestures are no longer necessary since an Act of 1910 decreed that the death of a sovereign does not affect the servants of the Crown. There is no pause in government.

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Friends and relatives might mourn and the people sorrow, but world affairs go on. The man dies or abdicates, but the nation which that man represented remains as firm as ever: kingship continues.

After George V had died, from St. James's Palace and from three points in the city the heralds proclaimed the accession of their "only lawful and rightful liege Lord Edward the Eighth, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India," and eleven months later with identical words they were proclaiming the accession of his brother, King George VI.

Eleven months of great promise . . . to end so sadly and suddenly when with a decided yet shaking hand King Edward at Fort Belvedere signed a typewritten document—not on official parchment, but on common foolscap paper—in the presence of his three brothers.

That document gave the throne to the Duke of York.

WE shall never know the truth of all the happenings preceding that tragic moment. We are too close to the event to see clearly, and had to remain silent while our beloved Edward put aside the crown of his ancestors.

There is no precedent in English history to which we can turn. Edward II, Richard II, and James II all abdicated, but their abdications were forced upon them; they were kings deemed—

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and justly so—unfit to reign; Edward VIII, however, of his own free will, stepped from the ancient throne. All had best be left now in silence, no matter how we may personally feel; what sympathy for, or even objections to, the King's act we may have, this is not the place to discuss the question. Only later historians, armed with all secret documents, will be able to discover the truth, and to estimate Edward's value both as man and King. We can but say that his brief reign showed enormous promise. For 325 days he ruled the Empire, and became one of the most popular monarchs this country has ever known: it is the shortest reign in our history for the last 372 years. Discounting Queen Jane, this record of royal brevity is held by Edward V who, fourteen days after his accession, was found to be illegitimate; with Harold II coming next, for after a nine months' rule he died magnificently at Senlac, battling with the Norman invader.

A reign of such promise was Edward VIII's that its glamour is unfortunately liable to shadow the opening years of George VI's. Most democratic of princes, Edward proved the paradox that democracy is firmer under a wise king than under a wise president.

So brief, so tragic a reign, and one so full of promise.

In ages past, men fought to gain that crown, they murdered, plotted, stole to gain it. But the outward shows of life, the pageantry of power, does not keep the same fascination for men to-day.

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William I invaded the country; he struck down Harold the elected King; he fought against the people, just to gain that power—the crown of England. Others that came after plotted together; William's sons rebelled, eager to tear him down; and later generation squabbled, killed, all to hold the sceptre in uneasy fingers; Stephen and Matilda bringing such anarchy into England that men swore that Christ and the saints were asleep; Henry II pushing Stephen aside, and then Henry's own sons turning against their father, until the violent hatred of one—later Richard I—and the treachery of another—later John—killed the poor King and gave the power into their hands, so that now brother could turn against brother in deep and jealous enmity. Again and again—murder so that the crown should fall: Edward II killed in so diabolic a fashion that one winces at the memory, while his adulterous Queen lay in the arms of the lover who slew her lord; and then her son's vengeance on that same lord when at last he had grown to man's estate. There is much blood upon the crown of England . . . Richard II who disappeared from history when his cousin wrenched the throne aside; and the tragic slaughter of the Wars of the Roses until poor witless Henry VI was probably slain by orders of Edward IV. The tale continues: the mystery of Edward's sons, the so-called Princes in the Tower, who vanished so peculiarly and so subtly that to-day no man can tell where lie their bones.

Blood upon the ancient crown . . . until with the rise of parliament in the seventeenth century,

## *GENTLEMEN . . . THE KING!*

the gradual destruction of the insane belief in the divine rights of Kings brought peace by robbing Kings of absolute power.

To-day no King would want that power: he can leave ruthlessness in the hands of dictators, for his hold upon the people is no longer one of fear and tyranny. He rules almost equally by election as by descent. He leaves the guidance of affairs to the people, through their elected parliaments, and rarely interferes with the constitution. Nevertheless, we have a perfect right to suspect that much goes on behind the palace walls of which we know but little. The King may seem a kind of figurehead—that is his protection—but if he wished to exert his power the people would undoubtedly most gladly follow him, because they know that he is no politician eager for gain. What can be given the King that he does not already possess?—only freedom. Freedom is the King's great sacrifice. He gives himself utterly and receives nothing in return, nothing but pain and trouble and tremendous worries. Ask any man in the street if he would be King, and few indeed would answer "yes." The people understand and sympathise with the King's position, and they appreciate his thankless sacrifice. They do not envy him as dictators can be envied and hated.

The man has become a symbol—a symbol of a nation, as a priest is a symbol of his god. We must never forget that Kings are as human as you and I; that they, too, suffer and know private troubles; that the crown and the robes and the glory of the throne do not steal humanity from them.

King, although the leader, is still the servant. That is the deep gulf between monarchy and dictatorship.

The monarchy in England is unique because it is democratic. It has taken centuries to create this ideal. Brave men have died in the battle, and Kings have fled or lost their lives, while the gradual evolution of democracy continued; until now, the King stands as the guardian of liberty. No matter if he should actively dislike a ministry, he accepts it because the people wish that rule. All that he can do is to attempt to interpret the people's wishes, and with all his prestige give support to the government in power.

It is a difficult, a courageous task. With apparently unlimited power, he must nevertheless obey; he must be for ever at the call of the people; he must work untingingly, silently for them; a mysterious august figure whose real worth cannot be appreciated whatever goodness he might perform, because of the official secrecy that has taken the place of that divinity which once hedged a King.

The people are jealous masters, they demand perfection, there must be no flaw in their King because he is the symbol of their country; and nowadays the difficulties of this position, this attempt of a human being to appear practically inhuman, have been made doubly arduous because of the newspapers. The British press is naturally silent about any weakness, but there are in London vigilant and clever foreign correspondents. Articles

and photographs in continental and American journals started the uproar about King Edward VIII, and revealed his desire to marry Mrs. Simpson. Under the eyes of men who have no reverence for his position, who live only for a scoop, the King must act most warily. He must fight to appear what no man ever could appear—without a weakness of any kind.

That is most certainly no easy task. How could one live happily with the knowledge that every time one left home cameras would be levelled and malicious eyes would watch? Even an actor, assaulted by his or her admirers, could not realise the pain of the King's position because, after all, an actor has brought this doom upon himself. He has chosen his profession. But the King is no actor, he is like you and me, unused to footlights. Yet with the work of diplomat he must combine that of actor; he must entertain even if he feels ill or tired; he must open institutions, attend public functions, and at night turn to the documents awaiting his attention. Rarely indeed can he enjoy the simple pleasures of life; rarely can he be alone with his family, unworried, free to act without self-consciousness.

One cannot help feeling sympathy for King George. He has taken the throne from an adored brother during a hurricane that almost destroyed monarchy: the task before him is a difficult and delicate one. Being the second son, he stood in the shadow until his accession. Before him always moved the figures of his father and brother; the people were dazzled



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by the press-glare thrown upon these two, they could see only a misty Duke of York with a charming wife and two beautiful children. He scarcely existed, yet he was performing the inevitable tasks of royalty with conscientious fervour. Edward had fought in Flanders and we were liable to forget that his younger brother had stood behind a gun at Jutland; Edward showed commiseration for the homeless, the unemployed; we did not realise that his brother had instituted those splendid outdoor camps where public school boys mix with working-lads and he with both classes. Edward was tumbling off his horse, flying his airplanes; we forgot that his brother played tennis at Wimbledon. Edward was golfing or playing squash; no one noticed that his brother golfed and played squash. . . .

Whatever Edward as Prince of Wales did was photographed and acclaimed in the world's press; while George, as Duke of York, was scarcely given minimum space except for his children. That may seem unfair but it was inevitable. Now that Edward has gone, we can look with open eyes and fair minds upon our new King. I do not think we shall be disappointed. He does not possess the brilliance of Edward, that individual if sometimes erratic King; he has the more solid qualities of his father who had remarked after his tumultuous Jubilee, "I am sure I cannot understand it, for after all, I am only an ordinary sort of fellow." For that reason, perhaps, the nation mourned the passing of George V so deeply that you were liable to be assaulted in London if you appeared without a

black tie. So deep had grown the nation's love that London became a city of despair the day the solemn cortège passed to Windsor. The "ordinary sort of fellow," the man who had "transmuted kingship into kinship," was no more, and all England was smothered in terrible gloom.

George VI, if not such an ordinary sort of fellow as his father, has yet that "common touch" which undoubtedly will make him equally beloved. He is obviously determined to be a constitutional King, one not, perhaps, capable of some extraordinary unexpected action, but one undertaking his duties seriously, calmly, with the nation's well-being and honour always before him. His extreme attention to detail has been often commented on; for instance, he is keenly interested in industrial conditions and when examining factories he will not leave until he has learned everything possible to learn.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury made the world conscious of one unfortunate failing. He commented on the King's "occasional and momentary hesitation in his speech." I remember when, as Duke of York, George VI visited Australia, and this impediment was then very far from occasional, but he has with patience and real courage mastered it. To conquer a weakness that springs from some psychological root is a difficult and gradual process, but the Duke of York was not deterred. His work demanded that he should speak continually and he intended to perform that task; he learned to talk afresh, until now the impediment is so slight

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that, had not the Archbishop drawn the world's attention to it, it might scarcely have been noticed.

George VI need feel no sense of deficiency in his slight stammer. Charles I, most dignified of Kings, and Edward I, perhaps our greatest, stammered badly except when thrilled with his subject. Edward was also handicapped with a heavily drooping eyelid. Physical defects are often the mainspring of greatness, and the common belief—by no means always correct—that most geniuses are small men, is based on this knowledge. The sense of inferiority drives men forward. It might drive them to megalomania, as with the ex-Kaiser and his crippled arm; or to political genius as with Franklin Roosevelt and his crippled legs.

One never knows—England may yet praise God for George VI's weakness because it gave him spiritual strength.

When George VI gave his declaration of accession, he sounded the keynote of his future reign in these words: "With my wife as helpmeet by my side, I take up the heavy task which lies before me." Hearing that, who could forget the tragic voice of his brother on the wireless—"I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love." As a bachelor, weary of bachelorhood and desiring home and happiness, Edward became King; but George succeeded with

a wife and children loved by the peoples of the Empire.

Royal marriages are usually state affairs, but the romance of Albert Duke of York and Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon does not enter that category. It cannot be questioned that this was no court intrigue but a real love-match; and Queen Elizabeth's charm and the beauty of her two children have brought to England a sense of genuine relief.

As George VI became automatically King of England on his brother's abdication, it might well be wondered why a coronation is necessary. It is an expensive and exhausting, if beautiful, ceremony; in our severe modern age it seems somewhat archaic, out of place. Yet that is not so. The coronation is in truth an offering of the King to the people and the people's acceptance of that King. It is the outward sign of kingship. He stands in Westminster Abbey before lords and commons, he kneels in humility before the altar, and he promises to obey the wishes of the people. Humbly he accepts the oath binding him to the people's laws. He does not make those laws; he accepts them and swears to stand by them. It is the fitting prelude to so august a task, this task of kingship that few men would have the courage to accept or the strength to fulfil.

The impressive ceremony remains in its old form, with slight variations. The details are by no means of interest only to antiquarians, for they are all based in some symbolic truth. When George VI on May 12, 1937, stands in Westminster Abbey he

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will repeat acts and words performed or spoken by his forefathers, and each word and act has a meaning—sometimes of great historic importance. In this modern world of unrest, of great guns and bomber planes and poison-gases, when everything seems irresistibly sweeping us to an abyss of destruction, men become impatient of tradition. Even the present scarcely exists—all dreams, dreams of terror and little hope, are of the future. But to despise tradition is to despise the foundations on which British democracy has been so painfully built.

By substituting to-day a president or dictator for King, we should be surrendering liberty, losing far more than we would gain. A literal socialism is as yet impossible in a country like England, rooted so powerfully in the age-old love of pagantry and with its reverence for the class-system. A true autocracy is equally impossible, as Kings like Charles I very swiftly discovered. The middle course is not only the safest for Great Britain and its Empire; it is the soundest. There is more democracy under a constitutional King than under a dictator: far more liberty, and Englishmen revere liberty. I believe strongly in communism for Russia, in democracy for America, France, and Spain, and I suppose the Germans and Italians want fascism as they have accepted it, but neither communism nor fascism is yet possible in modern England. They are not needed nor are they wanted.

We want our freedom under our King. He remains, untouched by party bias, a man who

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cannot be elected or possibly bribed, something permanent in this impermanent world. We would be lost without him; the Empire would crumble, and with its crumbling, freedom would die not only in England, but in many parts of the world. For he stays indestructible—the man himself may be put aside, as Edward VIII was put aside, but the King remains—enduring, something that dictators dare not attack, that even fascists must outwardly respect. To consider royalty an expensive luxury is completely to misunderstand kingship; it is an absolute necessity for Great Britain, the only thing that wards off from the nation the threat of revolution, that binds all classes in a national unity and holds together that scattered polyglot Empire of which we are so proud. Being an Australian long resident in England, I can speak of two different peoples and their feelings. I have heard it said that only fear of a Japanese invasion keeps Australia loyal, that it would secede were it strong enough. The theory is obviously absurd, for if Japan attacked Australia the British Navy at Singapore would be of little use: the American Navy is more the guardian of the Pacific. Japan would not dare strike at the Empire without making certain that Great Britain would have her hands full in the Mediterranean, as, in fact, she has already because of her alliance with Aryan Germany. The conflagration would be world-wide, and what could England do for Australia when fighting for her own life in Europe? No. Australia's loyalty is deep and profound. She proved that in the 1914 war: her youth laid down

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their lives in France and Egypt, on the terrible hills of Gallipoli, in a quarrel that did not concern them. And they were volunteers, no flail of conscription whipped them to the colours. Of loyalty in Canada and South Africa, as I have visited neither country, I have no right to speak, and of New Zealand there is no necessity to speak. She is the most inflexibly patriotic country in the world. When the danger of Edward's abdication assailed the Empire, it stood firm, with the inevitable exception of the Irish Free State. The Empire stood by kingship and not by the King. Mr. Baldwin hinted that the dominions' objections to Edward making Mrs. Simpson his Queen were even stronger than Great Britain's. This is understandable, as the most powerful church in South Africa takes a very strong anti-divorce stand; the Prime Minister of Australia is a Roman Catholic, and the country's stout morality was recently exposed to the whole world by its refusal to allow a British citizen to enter the country because, it was alleged, she loved a married Australian and might break into the sanctity of the home; New Zealand is a land of churches and continual Sundays; and Roman Catholicism is powerful amongst the French Canadians; besides, Canada being so close to the U.S.A., where the press was enjoying itself with real gusto, must have smarted under a deep resentment, for the King of England is the dominion's one defence against its neighbour's greatness, the one thing that gives it any sense of superiority.

The Empire stood uniformly against the

King and for kingship. It realised that without monarchy it could not endure, that even New Zealand would sever the navel-cord. Then, after this break-up, with so many small, wealthy, sparsely populated and defenceless countries no longer painted red upon the map, would come a world war the horrors of which it is impossible to imagine.

One man staves off that armageddon—the King.

To most Conservatives, my political opinions would seem the most scarlet of scarlets if they knew of them, and there are Tories who shudder to speak to me because by them I am considered a hopeless Bolshevik. Yet I am writing of the King and the principle for which he stands with admiration and even with reverence. That is not so paradoxical as it seems. Above all, I love freedom, and I would rather trust my freedom to a man who has proved his courage, his honesty, and his democratic principles, than I would to some upstart crazed with lust for power. The King is the guardian of our liberty, and we could have no nobler, no more human guardian. Proudly I raise my glass to—

“Gentlemen . . . the King!”

KING GEORGE VI, second son of George V, succeeded to the throne on December 10, 1936, a few days before his forty-first birthday. He was born at York Cottage on December 14, 1895. Edward IV, Henry VIII, Charles I, James II, and George V were all second sons, each was a Duke of York



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called by the accident of an elder brother's death to the throne. Our present King's full name is Albert Frederick Arthur George, and like his grandfather he renounced the name of Albert because it seemed almost a sacrilege to the memory of Victoria to have another royal Albert existing. The choice was also probably made as a symbol of the mainspring of his reign, the intention to return to the days of George V, leaping across the few months of Edward's rule.

He entered the navy under the pseudonym of Mr. Johnson, and was a midshipman in the *Collingwood* when the 1914 war struck the world. He was eager for the fight, but an attack of appendicitis kept him at home; then, when in February 1915 he returned to his ship, he had again to leave, this time because of severe gastric trouble that was eventually to take him permanently from the sea. But he was on board in time for Jutland, that confused, conflicting battle of which not even yet is the truth known. There, as a sub-lieutenant, he fought gamely in a gun-crew. His career as sailor, however, was soon to end. The gastric trouble developed into a duodenal ulcer, and after a successful operation, the Duke joined the Royal Naval Air Force.

We have been told that he has sometimes remarked on his ill-luck. And it began with his birth, for he had the ill manners to appear on the anniversary of the Prince Consort's death, to the alleged disapproval of Queen Victoria. In examinations his ill-luck dogged him, and he usually ended well near the bottom of the list; even his

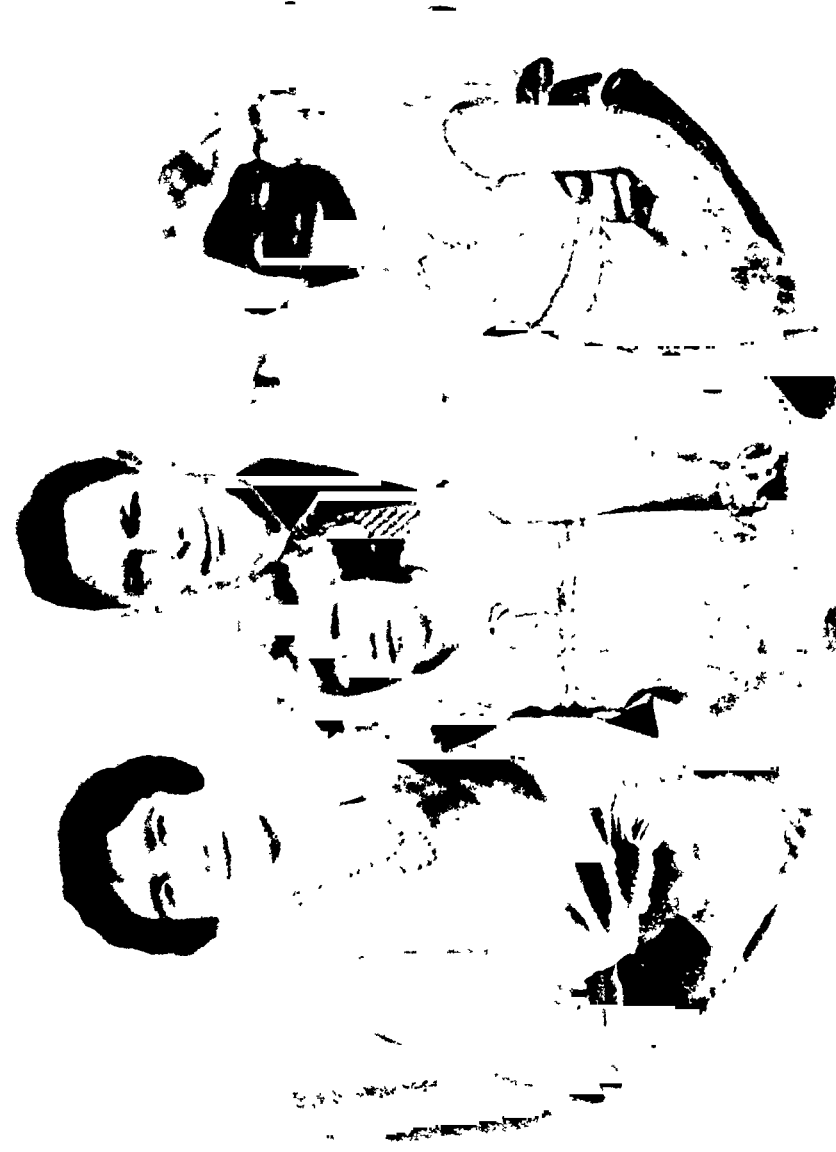
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promising naval career was interrupted and was at last cut short by a disloyal stomach. Then, to cap all, was that embarrassing stammer which naturally restrained him, made him shy and nervous, drove him to introspection and away from his fellows. But by perseverance and courage he has conquered his ill-luck. He drove it from him when shyly he proposed to Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, youngest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Strathmore and Kinghorne. There is a tale that he proposed three times and was twice refused because Lady Elizabeth was afraid he had been officially advised to marry her; this tale is contradicted by yet another, that the Lady Elizabeth when being asked to verify this by an impertinent friend is alleged to have replied: "Do you think it is likely?"

The Lady Elizabeth was born on August 4, 1900, and is therefore five years younger than her husband. The marriage was solemnised at Westminster Abbey on April 26, 1923, and their first child, the Princess Elizabeth, was born on April 21, 1926; their second, the Princess Margaret, on August 21, 1930.

Such are the simple facts of our new King's history, but they tell little of the man himself or of his intense absorption in the problems of industry and in the youth of the Empire. The manager of a large manufacturing firm remarked once to a friend, as reported in the *London Times*: "Of all the many visitors we have had here, I have never met one who asked more sensible questions or showed greater understanding of our funda-

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*Photo : Marcus Adams*

THEIR MAJESTIES KING GEORGE THE SIXTH AND QUEEN ELIZABETH,  
WITH THE PRINCESSES ELIZABETH AND MARGARET ROSE



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mental problems. He does like getting to the bottom of things."

Perhaps that sums up his character far better than any other description I have heard. He is industrious and persevering; during his journey through New Zealand and Australia he kept a careful diary of the daily happenings. Yet, away from his work, he can forget his position; he can romp with the boys at his annual camps, joining in their games, their concerts, and their fun.

And, most popular attribute of a British sovereign, he is a keen sportsman. Like his father, he is a good shot; like his brother, he is an excellent horseman and golf player and a lover of gardening; and he is almost a first-class tennis-player. These qualities, even more than his amazing memory, his deep knowledge of industry and his conscientiousness, will endear him to the people. To those who require deeper things, the qualities are undoubtedly there, ready for the service of the nation he rules.

Again I say:

"Gentlemen . . . the King!"

PART ONE

*THE CORONATION OF  
KING GEORGE THE SIXTH AND  
QUEEN ELIZABETH*

## II

### *The Line of Kings*

KINGSHIP in England was not always hereditary. In Saxon days the King was elected by the Witan—a conclave of nobles and bishops, in normal times the King's Council, and by no means democratic. But their choice, at first dictated by the strength and intelligence of a leader, soon became limited to the son of the previous King as in modern times. There was never a choice of Queen—or rather Lady, as she was then called—unless we accept the more than doubtful reign of Sexburh, alleged to have ruled Wessex from the death of her husband Cenwall (? 673) to the accession of Æscwine (674–76). Bede tells us that during this period the kingdom was disrupted, and it is more than likely that there was actually no ruler, Sexburh's name being taken to cover a gap in time. It was the great Cnut who struck the hereditary rule aside. By his cunning and skill he conquered the English, although luck was with him—or perhaps poison—when his courageous adversary, Edmund Ironside, was taken from the stage by sudden death. Cnut forced the Witan to elect him even though Edmund had left two sons; these boys Cnut sent to Sweden, asking the King to murder them quietly. Although the boys lived, being brought up in Hungary, Cnut reigned, and was himself followed by his



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sons, until with Edward the Confessor the old English line was restored. But Edward left no children, and at his express wish, Harold II, on his death, was elected by the Witan. Harold came of no very noble birth. His father Godwin was the first of his line of whom we know, and apparently he was of a somewhat obscure station until his abilities were discovered by Cnut. Harold did not keep the throne long. Slain by William I at Senlac—now Battle—with his death the English customs died and the Norman took their place.

When the Witan elected a man for King, the Church consecrated him, and he became thereby semi-divine. This belief in his semi-divinity was widely held in the Middle Ages, when to the very last Richard II could not conceive it possible that a half-god like himself could be deposed. The Stuarts tried to revive the idea with disastrous results. The whole coronation service is, in fact, a deeply religious one, and bears striking resemblance to the consecration of a bishop; yet it is difficult not to believe that in the pre-Norman days its main importance was the oath and the swearing of fealty and homage. The King promised to govern, and the clergy and laymen swore to obey him if he kept to his oath; the mystical side developed rapidly through the Middle Ages until even so fanatically religious a man as Henry V could consider himself spiritual enough to defy the Pope of Rome.

Hereditary right in kingship grew swiftly under the Normans, but the law of primogeniture was only gradually accepted. William I was

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followed by his third son, that roaring lion with the red face—Rufus, blasphemer, debauchee, and hero, although an elder brother Robert was alive, dispossessed for rebellion. Then when the unknown archer in the New Forest directed his arrow at the Red King, Rufus was followed by his young brother Henry I, yet Robert was still living. Henry I tried to break the fast English rule that no woman should sit upon the throne, and he demanded an oath of allegiance to his daughter Matilda. Nobles and clergy swore that oath, but few intended to keep it; Matilda's supplanter, Stephen, actually struggled to be first to render homage to her. This refusal to have women on the throne may seem unfair to us with our modern conception of sex equality; but we are not living in times when man's insane lust for personal power is so easily gratified—at least, it is now not quite so easily gratified in England, whatever may happen in other countries. Women cannot use a sword. Weapons are light to-day. As I write these words, women are fighting in the ranks shoulder to shoulder with their men against Moors, Germans, and Italians in Spain; but to wield a sword of the Middle Ages would tax the power of even a strong modern man, let alone a woman. When Matilda invaded England to dispossess Stephen, she did not fight; she left the waging of war to her half-brother, the loyal brave Duke of Gloucester. Although women could not reign, they could carry on the blood of kingship. Stephen demanded the throne by right of his descent from William I's daughter Adela, and Henry II

followed Stephen because he was the son of Matilda.

The hereditary laws were extremely muddled, but they were gradually clarifying. When Richard I died in agony of gangrene, the throne was vacant. There were two claimants, Richard's brother John and his nephew Arthur, son of Geoffrey, a brother older than John but younger than Richard. The law was now becoming such that men were troubled about the succession; not so long before they would not have hesitated between a grown man and a youth. We are extremely fortunate to possess an authentic contemporary account, *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, of the whole situation, written by William Marshal's own page. On Richard's death, Marshal—the most noble man of his generation—discussed the situation with an archbishop called Walter. The archbishop—we are uncertain whether of Rouen or Canterbury—stood for Arthur, but the wise Marshal gave his opinion that John should be elected. The question of law he put aside for, said he: "Ha, Sir, methinks this would be wrong; Arthur is led by evil councillors; he is proud and haughty, and loves not the English." Expediency was of more importance than legality. John got the throne, and it is more than probable that when proofs, centuries later, were given the council of the illegitimacy of Edward V, and Richard III was persuaded to take the crown, Richard in his decision was swayed by the same motives as swayed William Marshal. He too must have realised that if he rejected the proofs and insisted

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on his nephew's coronation, revolution under a minor with a shaky claim would be inevitable.

Yet as time changed tradition into law, even the wise Marshal could not have resisted the hereditary rule. Henry III was a minor when his father John lay in the agony of death and implored his retainers to see the Marshal and tell him "that he may have my son in his charge, and for ever keep him and guard him, for the child will never be able to hold his land through any one but the Marshal." William was now about seventy-three, and he did not want the trust, yet nobly he accepted, and he wept when the nine-year-old boy came to meet him, carried on horseback by a retainer. "Welcome, sir," said little Henry III, "truly, I commit myself to God and to you, that for God's sake you may take care of me."

Under Henry III's futile tyrannical rule, the nobles, led by Simon de Montford, rose and fought their King, but they did not attempt to depose him; so too it had been when the barons rose against Henry's father John and trapped him into sealing Magna Carta at Runnymede. They did not depose him, and only with great reluctance did they at last call in the help of the son of Philip Augustus of France. Again when we come to Richard II we find he was a minor when his grandfather Edward III died. He had uncles of experience, but despite all rumours, none tried to usurp the throne. They were satisfied to take it by bullying their nephew until he grew old enough to bully them even more brutally in return. Richard was at last deposed by his cousin Henry IV. When Henry first

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landed in England he intended to claim the country by right of conquest, but from this he was dissuaded. He locked Richard into the Tower and with extraordinary cunning somehow induced him to abdicate. There is no suggestion of torture. When he signed his abdication, Richard was apparently quite cheerful; he read the whole deposition aloud and actually gave Henry his signet ring. Armed with this, Henry faced parliament. He rose to his feet near the empty throne that was draped with a pall of cloth-of-gold. He crossed himself on forehead and breast and read aloud these words, "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England and the crown with all the members and appurtenances thereto, I that am descended by right line of blood coming from the good King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of His grace hath sent me, with the help of my kin and of my friends, to recover it; the which realm was in point of being undone for default of governance and undoing of the good laws." Even Henry who held his cousin's signed deposition, who was accepted without question as ruler, was forced to adduce fictitious hereditary claim, for there is no question that the argument about the "right line of blood coming from the good King Henry" was false. It was based on the lie that Henry III's second son, Edmund Crouchback, was in fact the elder son. In time the true race came back to the throne. Henry IV held his crown in a shaky grip, his son Henry V was too powerful to be attacked, and by the time that

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Henry VI was crowned as a minor too long a period had passed for men to wish to fight in an old quarrel. Yet the issue was forced on them, for Henry VI's mother was the daughter of the mad King Charles VI of France, and through her came the strain of madness that made of Henry VI a simpleton, a child in the firm unscrupulous hands of his vindictive wife Queen Margaret. The commons rebelled against her under Jack Cade, but they were defeated; and the Duke of York of the true line was forced to take action and to depose Henry. Edward IV carried on the continuity of blood stemmed by Henry IV. It continued through Richard III, Edward's brother—Edward's children being proved illegitimate, for they were the children of a second marriage, the first being a secret one. Richard was slain at Bosworth and Henry VII became King, reviving the Lancastrian claim of Henry IV, but to make certain—for his Lancastrian right was exceptionally flimsy—he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV. To do this he had to reverse the bâton sinister, and with great care he destroyed every copy he could get his hands on of the act of parliament declaring her illegitimate. Luckily a copy survived. As for the question of the fate of Edward's two sons, who would, if legitimate, be the rightful rulers—that is a subject I have discussed fully elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Let it be stated merely that they disappeared. If alive at Henry's accession—and it is more than

<sup>1</sup> *King Richard III: A Chronicle* (Ivor Nicholson & Watson), 1932; *On Some Bones in Westminster Abbey* (Ivor Nicholson & Watson), 1934.

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probable that they were—no further mention of them exists.

When Henry VIII became King he had made quite certain that there would be no Yorkist rebellions. He imitated his father in chopping off the heads of any of the true blood he could find, and he succeeded so thoroughly that after 1499 not one of the legitimate male issue survived. Henry VIII attempted to revise the ancient laws, he insisted that he had the right to disinherit the children of his elder sister Margaret, Queen of Scotland, if his own children should fail to produce descendants, as actually did happen. But Kings with all their power cannot defy the ancient laws. The great-grandson of Margaret and the gallant if slightly irresponsible hero who died at Flodden, was proclaimed King of England on the death of Elizabeth.

One would have thought that Henry VIII's failure to command the laws might have given caution to the Stuarts, but they were giddied by the unction spilled on their heads at the coronation. They strove to revert to the medieval conception of kingship's divinity, and they quickly suffered for it—Charles I with his head—when they strove to bully the commons. It has been suggested that Cromwell wished to be crowned but was afraid to accept, and the fact that he once transported the throne to Westminster Hall and sat in it has been taken as proof of this. But Cromwell was far too sane a man to desire kingship; he must have known that tradition cannot be swept aside in a country like England.

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Even the example of Charles I did not deter James II when he followed his wise brother, Charles II, to the throne. James tried to bully the commons until the threat of rebellion grew so loud that he fled to the Continent. William of Orange became King. The situation was difficult because William had no claim at all except by virtue of his marriage to Mary, daughter of James II. Parliament got over the difficulty by deciding that as James had abdicated, the throne was vacant; yet this swept aside the old law, for, in that case, the rightful claimant was James's son. But parliament was wise to bar the Stuarts. They had had two chances and had failed miserably in both. As William refused to be his wife's gentleman usher, they were crowned jointly—a unique affair—King William III and Mary II. A Bill of Rights of 1689 provided that the succession should fall to the children of Mary, of Mary's sister Anne—second daughter of James II, and wife of George of Denmark, brother of King Christian V—and lastly of William. As no one of the three produced a child, parliament was forced to issue a new disposition. It was still determined to have no truck with James II's sons; it ignored the children of Henrietta, Charles I's daughter, and the claims of Charles and Edward, brothers of the Princess Sophia, and chose Sophia herself. It was mainly a religious question. England was determined to be Protestant and to go to any lengths to remain Protestant. It chose George, the son of Sophia, Electress and Dowager-Duchess of Hanover, daughter of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James I.



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From that moment the link has never been broken. George I, George II, George III, George IV, William IV, Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, and now, George VI.

And there is no longer any risk of it ever being broken.

PERHAPS we should thank Charles I and James II. They forced the issue, and by their very tyranny, by the death of one, and the expulsion of the other, the English throne has become the most secure in the world. While other monarchies, built on the out-of-date theory of divine right, became practically dictatorships and were easily swept aside when the commons demanded their rights, our monarchy, based on parliament, has survived triumphantly and remains secure, as solid as the constitution itself. In its Act of Settlement during the Mary-William-Anne tangle, parliament laid down definite binding laws on the throne. No Roman Catholic can rule, no King or Queen can marry a Roman Catholic—the term papist is used, a confusing word that might be twisted by an unscrupulous ruler. But there has not been the slightest suggestion of any leaning towards Rome by the descendants of George I—excluding George IV's marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Nevertheless by showing its power, parliament made the monarchy secure.

For that reason, I drink to the memory of Charles I and James II who created exactly what they fought to destroy—a powerful commons and a secure Protestant and democratic kingship.

### III

#### *The King's Titles*

By hereditary and parliamentary right, George VI is King of England, but there are many other titles that naturally come to him. The Union with Scotland Act of 1707 brought the Scottish succession to England, as did the Union with Ireland Act of 1800 bring Ireland into the kingdom. But it was not until the Royal Titles Act of 1901 that any true recognition was given to the dominions. The King then became ruler of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, and later by an Act of 1927, the words United Kingdom were dropped, and the simple Great Britain retained.

Against strong and rather stupid opposition, Disraeli fought to have Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India. It was thought at the time that such a title might cause resentment in India, but the Durbar of January 1, 1877, when Lord Lytton announced the title, showed that the critics had been far too sensitive about Indian feelings. The princes were most definitely for it, and their loyalty was proved entirely genuine when, with great courage, George V attended the Delhi Durbar of 1911-12 to receive as King-Emperor the homage of the princes, as George VI will do, probably in 1939.

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The King still retains one outworn title—Defender of the Faith. When it is remembered that the Pope gave this to Henry VIII for his violent attack on Luther before the Reformation, it is an obvious anachronism to be worn by a modern Protestant prince. Henry, when all friendship with Rome was over, could not bear to part with the superb ringing phrase. He kept it, although he certainly had no right to it, and it has remained with the crown ever since. Perhaps we had best be kind and forget the Roman Catholic part; the phrase, except for its origin, might well be accepted as meaning the Protestant faith.

While one anachronism has been retained, another was dropped, and wisely dropped, by George III, because it was not only absurd, it was dangerous—the title, King of France. To keep a title that even at the beginning had little sense, merely permitted old hatreds to smoulder. Our Kings were never Kings of France, and the title was a base excuse for conquest in the Middle Ages. Edward III invented it. When the French King, Charles IV, died in 1328, and left no heir save an unborn grandchild, the throne was claimed—in the event of the child proving a girl, which actually happened—by Philip, the son of Charles's uncle, and Edward III of England, son of Charles's sister. It is true that legally Edward's claim was the stronger, but morally it did not exist; the French could not accept an Englishman as King; their racial pride would never have allowed it, and this is proved by the ghastly slaughter caused by Edward III and by Henry V when he revived

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the claim. Henry actually conquered the French, and his son was crowned King in Paris only to prolong the ghastly wars and to create a bitterness that existed until the last century, and was only eradicated by the comradeship of the 1914 war.

By right of George I, the King of England was also Elector of Hanover, but the title was merely a nuisance and was given to the Duke of Cumberland in 1837 when the Salic law forbade Hanover being ruled by a woman. All connection with the Continent vanished, however, in the 1914 war. Our royal house of Guelph had until then been known as Hanover or Brunswick. On July 17, 1917, a royal proclamation announced that from then on the royal family would be known as Windsor, and that the other German titles of Duke of Saxony and Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha would vanish.

On accession, the King is also invested with numerous military and naval titles. George VI became Admiral of the Fleet, Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Marines, Field-Marshal, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Colonel-in-Chief of the Life Guards, of the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues), of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, of the Corps of Royal Engineers, of the Grenadier Guards, of the Coldstream Guards, of the Scots Guards, of the Irish Guards, and of the Welsh Guards, and Captain-General of the Honourable Artillery Company, Territorial Army.

## IV

### *The Royal Banner and Coat-of-Arms*

THE Royal Banner is usually and inaccurately called the Standard. In it are quartered the royal arms, and it should not be flown except in the presence of the King. Such a law, of course, is never kept. The Royal Banner will be seen all over Britain in the month of May 1937, and you may rest assured that there will be no prosecutions. In Scotland, Lyon King-of-Arms has the right to order such arrests, but we have no record of his ever having used his power; this power no longer exists in England, and with free heart you can wave the banner, you can hoist it above your house as if it were a palace and the King rested within. On your lightning-conductor, protector against the wrath of God, you can unfurl the leopards, the lion, and the harp, and grin at the emissaries of the Royal College of Arms passing beneath.

The banner is the King's personal property; the Union Jack is common to his people, for it is the flag of England. The crosses of St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew, symbol of the union of England, Ireland, and Scotland, must be flown in all King's flags on sea or land. Australia has it in a corner above the stars of the six states; New Zealand has it above the Southern Cross; Newfoundland and Canada carry it; South Africa

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shows it with the arms of the Dutch Republic. Only the Irish Free State refuses the Union Jack upon its flag. It is in the White Ensign with the cross of St. George, for the White Ensign is the sign of Kings' ships in commission; the Blue Ensign is for other British shipping. The Union Jack, of course, represents the Union of England, Scotland, and Ireland, but the word "Jack" is unexplained. It is probably derived from the jack, or military coat, of the Middle Ages.

THE lions first appeared on the arms of England in the time of Richard I. Many are the ingenious theories put forward to explain them, but the most likely seems that they were derived from the arms of the Dukes of Normandy—two leopards on a red field, for our present lions, in heraldry, are actually leopards. When Henry II, father of Richard, lay dying, he gave to his beloved illegitimate son Geoffrey a gold finger-ring engraved with a leopard, and Matthew Paris tells us that the same King Henry's eldest son bore a shield "per pale gules and sable, three gold leopards." Edward III when he took to himself the title King of France appropriated the French lilies and quartered them with the leopards. In 1603, quarters were added for Scotland and Ireland; then in 1714, the arms of Hanover joined the quarterings, only to disappear in 1837, the French lilies having gone even earlier, in 1801, during the reign of George III. Our present royal arms are therefore: England's three bearded long-bodied leopards padding in two quarters, in the first and fourth, turning their faces

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to gaze kindly at the people before a sky of blood; in the second quarter prances the lion of Scotland, poking out a long curved tongue, its giant tail proudly unfurled behind; in the third quarter, most inappropriate symbol, the harp of Ireland rests as if there could be nothing but singing and love between the leopards, the lion, and the gentle harp.

The supporters of these royal arms are to-day a lion and a unicorn. This was not always so. Our first reference to supporters comes from Richard II who had an angel each side of his arms; Henry IV had a swan and an antelope; Henry V a lion and an antelope; Edward IV a lion and a white heart or a bull; Richard III two boars; Henry VII a dragon and a greyhound; Henry VIII a dragon and a lion or greyhound; and the variations continued until James I brought south the unicorn of Scotland. From that date there has been no alteration.

The origin of the unicorn remains a mystery. Why Scotland chose it is unknown, yet the ancient myth that only a virgin could soothe to quietness the fiery horned beast was proved when on her death-bed Elizabeth chose James as her successor. Perhaps its religious associations made Scotland decide on this strange beautiful creature, for it was in the Middle Ages used as a symbol of Christ, its horn being the unity of Father and Son.

## V

### *St. Edward and Westminster Abbey*

BEFORE the building of Westminster Abbey, the Saxons usually crowned their Kings at Winchester Cathedral, and Winchester remained an important royal city until the times of Stephen. Here was then stored the treasury. But after Edward the Confessor raised Westminster Abbey it became the natural crowning and burial-place of Kings. Edward built on a smaller foundation raised by Edgar in 969. He was a queer man, this Edward who became a saint. It is probable he was an albino; he was exceptionally tall and had dazzlingly white hair and beard, while his face was red and plump. He was forty when he reached the throne in 1042 and he had lived most of those years in exile, in Normandy; his father, the cowardly, vicious, and despicable Ethelred the Unredy—meaning without rede, or counsel—having fled before Cnut. Edward did not like England any more than he liked women; he married because Godwin was the great man of England and Godwin had a daughter, and he became King because Godwin bullied him. He loved only two things—Normans and God—and at every opportunity he turned towards them. He lost the Normans because their tyrannical behaviour started a revolution, and Edward, although a man of terrific furies, was no soldier;



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but God did not desert him. When offered the throne, he protested that he had sworn to travel to the Holy Land, and as the people of England had no intention of permitting him to leave the country, how could he be both King and pilgrim? This difficulty was easily overcome. The Pope absolved him of his oath on condition that he built an abbey in honour of St. Peter. Thus was Westminster born, and Edward lived just long enough to see his dream finished. He was the first King to be buried within its walls—if we exclude Harold Harefoot buried in Edgar's foundation.

The tomb of Edward became miracle-working very soon after his death. It is simple enough to understand why Edward should become a saint, the most popular of all English saints until St. Thomas Becket and St. George usurped him. England was buckling under to the powerful will of the Conqueror, and a nation, broken and dispirited, inevitably turns to the memory of past glories. Not that Edward's reign was by any means glorious, but he was the last of the English Kings, excluding Harold. And under no circumstance could Harold have become a saint. Apart from the fact that the Normans would never for a second have tolerated his canonisation, Harold was a brave soldier, a lover of women, and an active politician, not a moody old man with white hair and beard and slender snow-white hands who hated state occasions, whose one known human desire was hunting, and who avoided women. The legend grew that he never saw his wife after marriage except in the company of others, but

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there is no contemporary confirmation of this. He is spoken of as chaste but in no unusual sense.

A great many legends grew around Edward in an amazingly short time, some are of course preposterous, but others are obviously based on fact. The belief, by the way, that the King's hands had the power to cure scrofula—Dr. Johnson being touched for this by Queen Anne—dates from Edward who once, it is said, cured a girl of suppurating glands in the neck. The adoration of Edward's memory increased so rapidly that hagiographers swiftly produced legend after legend and the force of popular opinion made Pope Alexander canonise him in 1161 on the anniversary of his death.

An elaborate shrine was built by Henry III, but no trace of it remains. We can, however, reconstruct it easily enough from old records and particularly from the illuminations in a manuscript of Edward's life in the University Library, Cambridge, a mid-thirteenth century work. It must have been bright with gold and jewels, and embellished with statues; and in its sides, holes were made through which the pilgrims could enter—a common medieval practice—to touch the bones or simply to crawl around the coffin.

You will find in the coronation ceremony continual references to St. Edward, to his chair and his sword—these are only labels of things long past. Nothing of Edward's remains except his memory and this great church that has risen around his foundation. It is pleasant to think that even after

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his death he helped to build the walls with the offerings of pilgrims.

It is right that Kings should be crowned here, near Edward's modern shrine. The Abbey is the centre of the Empire and, despite the odd appearance of many of the giant statues, it yet embodies and reflects the majesty and dignity of England.

## VI

### *History of the Ceremony*

To trace the history of coronations to its first mystical beginnings is well beyond my power. The rite is so old that in truth it might almost be said to have no beginnings. It comes to us out of dim worlds, and in countless forms has been practised by all nations. It is safest to keep purely to what we know of the English form, and that in itself is ancient enough. Apparently the earliest record we possess is a seventh century one in which it is recorded, in the life of St. Columba, that the saint placed "his hand upon the head" of King Aidan (d. 606) and "consecrated and blessed him." Then in the Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York in the middle of the eighth century, we discover a definite service entitled *Missa pro rege in die benedictionis ejus* in which, after the Gospel, the officiant prays and pours oil from a horn upon the King's head, the bishops and nobles place a sceptre in the King's hand, give him also a staff, and put a helmet on his head, thrice crying, "May King N. live for ever. Amen. Amen. Amen." The King is then enthroned and given the kisses of homage and fealty.

There is another Anglo-Saxon form called, for no known reason, the Order of Ethelred II (?968-1016), which is more than likely the one that per-

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sisted from the late ninth century to the crowning of William I. The main divergence of this form from that of Egbert is the placing of the mass after the coronation, and the mention of a ring and a crown. The third English order is twelfth century, labelled without any apparent reason, Henry I. It is similar to the earlier ones, but more detailed: the King is anointed on the head, breast, shoulders, and elbows. The sceptre is mentioned and a royal mantle, and the litany is introduced.

The fourth English service is the most important. It is that contained in the *Liber Regalis*. This was used in 1307 and probably continued to be used until the Reformation. It is most detailed and remains the basis of the ceremony of George VI and Elizabeth described in the next chapter. Naturally, it is more elaborate, pomp and ostentation being a glory of the medieval days when Kings loved to feel the crown upon their heads, and to dazzle their subjects with jewels and shining robes. If, as seems probable, this was the form used for the coronation of Richard II, we can well understand why the ten-year-old boy had to be carried out in the arms of his tutor Simon Burley at the conclusion. It is insufferably long and exhausting for a grown man; for a child it must have been agony.

We come next to the English orders, for the earlier ones are naturally in Latin. There is the 1603 order, a faithful if dull translation; and no real change in the ritual occurs until 1685, when the Roman Catholic James II ordered Archbishop Sancroft to make various changes because

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of his faith and to abridge it, which the archbishop did with excessive zeal. The 1689 version follows, and it was muddled by Henry Compton: since then the alterations have not been great, chiefly a matter of elimination.

It will therefore be seen that when on May 12, King George VI enters the great Abbey, that creator and burial-place of Kings, he will perform the rites his ancestors performed for centuries. The differences are not so many that they break the continuity.

## VII

### *The Ceremony*

It will be very crowded in Westminster Abbey on the morning of Wednesday, May 12, 1937. Ladies will yawn at having for once to rise before the hour their serving-maids crawl gingerly from bed every day. And it will be cold, for this is an English spring. Yet great robes will keep delicate bodies warm, robes trimmed with ermine, for which hundreds of lovely little beasts have been slaughtered most horribly, in excruciating torment. Those who visited Norfolk House during the two weeks of November 1936, when a peer's and a peeress's robes were there exhibited on wax models, can imagine that august splendid scene in May. Long folds of heavy crimson velvet, light flushing over them at every movement, sliding across the pile to fade in deep rich fluted shadows; capes of white miniver edged with black as if splashed with ink—it will seem a medieval world, a world of sensate ghosts, of phantoms animating the bodies of their descendants. And the ladies, the different length of their trains declaring rank, will glow, scarlet and lustrous like the men, pale faces proud beneath the coronets. Colour will blazon like flame under the high dim roof of the Abbey, dissolving in the gradual light of early

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morning, milky light floating through tall coloured windows, petalling the walls with translucent autumn leaves, caressing the stiff unmoving banners of England that, like painted axes, will be poised above. . . . Such has the Abbey looked for centuries upon these impressive days when the throne is once more offered to a King.

It will be chilly at seven o'clock on that May morning, yet whose goose-fleshed skin would be frail enough to keep him or her at home? Who would not defy weather and sick-bed to stand there when, as the last solemn stroke of Big Ben dies—is absorbed it would seem into the ancient stone—the Dean of Westminster walks slowly into his church, heading a procession carrying on cushions the regalia of England? This regalia, jewelled metal emblems and robes of kingship, has been guarded all night in the Jerusalem Chamber of the old Abbot's House—the chamber in which tormented Henry IV died before the fire, brushing aside the ghost of murdered Richard II and gasping warnings to his eldest son, Henry V—the chamber in which Elizabeth Woodville, Queen of Edward IV, suffered the agony of childbirth, hiding in sanctuary from the armed men of the Earl of Warwick. From behind the thick plate glass in the Wakefield Tower of the Tower of London, the regalia has been brought to rest one night within the Abbey walls. They do not trust the Abbey for more than one night; many centuries ago when the treasure was stored here, thieves burrowed in and had joyous



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holiday until discovered by the inquisitors of Edward I, as a latter chapter of this book will tell. But to-day few thieves would 'dare touch the crown jewels of England; the regalia could probably rest always in the Abbey without fear of sacrilege.

Down the nave the clergy will walk slowly, headed by the Dean, their vestments stiff and glittering with gold thread. Like gaudy beetles will they come, while behind them the sombrely clad scholars of Westminster School will troop in modern evening-dress, for these lucky boys are by ancient right to represent the people of the Empire.

Now the heralds, most medieval of all: Chester, Windsor, Lancaster, York, Richmond, Somerset; and the pursuivants, Rouge Croix, Rouge Dragon, Blue Mantle, Portcullis, and perhaps Fitzalan and Carnarvon. Their stiff coloured tabards will bring the Middle Ages back to us, tabards showing the royal arms on front and back and sleeves; around their necks will clink collars of gold bearing the mystic letters SS—the Lancastrian symbol which perhaps meant *Sovereign*. Garter King-of-Arms will lead them, wearing a crown of gold—a circlet sprouting acanthus leaves and bearing the legend, *Miserere mei Dominus secundum tuam miserecordiam*—with Clarenceux King-of-Arms, herald of below the Trent, and Norroy King-of-Arms, herald of above the Trent. These heralds and pursuivants escort the representatives of foreign lands come to do honour to the King of Great Britain and the Empire, Emperor of India.

## THE CEREMONY

Amongst the scarlet-and-silver-and-gold uniforms, amongst mid-nodding dyed plumes and feathers, will show, impressively stark, the black-and-white of the United States of America, with no medal, no order, no sash.

As the bells cry overhead, ringing their joyous peal of welcome to the coronation, distantly a murmur swells to thunder as the massed people in the streets shout at their King's approach in his knobby gilt carriage. Louder and louder, dimming the bells to a little tinkling—the crying, of the people, truest of all homage, a shouting of ecstatic love, of the love of subjects for their new Monarch and his Queen. As the shouting swells deafeningly into a crescendo of joy, the stately ceremony continues in Westminster Abbey. Churchmen in two rows are walking down the nave. Then in heraldic tabard the King's Champion enters, no longer mounted and dressed in steel as when he cried his challenge before the days of George IV. He is followed by the Sword-bearer, and the helmed Gentlemen of the Bodyguard, each of whom grip the tall haft of a halbert, its curved-edged, jagged-backed blade shining like quicksilver in the glancing light.

At the west door of the Abbey wait Dean and Chapter bearing the regalia. And as, to the tumultuous acclamation of the people, King and Queen reach the Abbey, the procession begins, for each is preceded by his and her regalia, by clergy and peers until they reach the theatre—the raised platform built between

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

the four great pillars, and on which stands the throne.

WITH the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Lord High Constable, the Earl Marshal and Garter King-of-Arms, the Archbishop of Canterbury presents the King to his people. He asks, "Sirs, I here present unto you King George, the undoubted King of this realm: Wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" The people shout and the boys of Westminster cry, "God save King George!" The trumpets sound amidst the clamour.

"God save King George!"

On the altar are laid Bible, chalice, and paten, given by the bishops; then beside these, the Archbishop places the regalia given by the peers. And the gold plate pales before the jewels that flicker from its dimmed metal with a hundred coloured eyes. Two bishops intone the litany. The King takes off his crimson velvet cap as the litany begins, and he keeps it off until communion. He remains covered during the sermon which follows. It is usually a very brief sermon, demanding loyalty from the people, royalty from the King. Then comes the Oath. The King replies to the Archbishop's questions, saying that he is prepared to give the Oath. He promises to govern the people of the United Kingdom and the Dominions according to the statutes in parliament and the laws and customs of parliament, to cause law and justice in mercy to be in his judgments, to maintain to the

## THE CEREMONY

utmost of his power the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion established by law, to maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as established by law in England, and to preserve unto the bishops and clergy of England and the Church there committed to their charge all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them.

He rises from his chair-of-state on the theatre—the Queen sitting near him—and, standing uncovered at the altar, solemnly swears to keep his Oath. He has one hand upon the Bible as he speaks, and this Bible must be complete; it must contain the Apocrypha. He kisses the Book, he signs the Oath, then he returns to his chair and kneels as the Archbishop begins the hymn, *Veni Creator*.

Now follows the anointing, that mystic rite, so old that we do not know its origin. The King stands while the Lord Chamberlain takes from him the heavy crimson robes, then he walks again to the altar. Four Knights-of-the-Garter uphold above him a canopy of silk or cloth-of-gold—at Richard II's and Henry IV's coronations this canopy was held by the Barons of the Cinque Ports—a claim which they might well revive to-day—while from the altar the Dean of Westminster takes the gold ampulla shaped like an eagle which contains the holy oil. From this he pours the oil into the silver-gilt spoon. The Archbishop of Canterbury then anoints the King. He makes the sign of the

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cross with the oil on the crown of the King's head, on his breast, and on the palms of his hands. After that the Archbishop blesses the King, who then rises while the Dean cloaks him with the colobium sindonis, the supertunica, a long-sleeved pall of cloth-of-gold, with a cloth-of-gold girdle. The Dean takes from the altar the spurs, symbol of chivalry, and the Lord Chamberlain kneels as he touches the King's heels with them. They are returned to the altar. The sword of state is given by its bearer to the Lord Chamberlain, who leaves it in St. Edward's Chapel, and takes another sword to the peer in place of the one surrendered. This second sword the Archbishop gives to the King, and it is buckled on him by the Lord Chamberlain. The King offers it to the altar, for this sword symbolises Justice. The Lord Chamberlain then redeems it for the sum of one hundred shillings; it is given back to him by the Dean, and for the remainder of the ceremony it is upheld naked before the King.

The Master of the Robes gives the Dean the stole which is placed on the King, who is then invested with the pallium or imperial mantle of cloth-of-gold, the Lord Chamberlain fastening the clasps across the breast. The Archbishop next takes to the King the Orb with the Cross, symbol of Christ's domination of the world. This is placed on the altar by the Dean, while the Archbishop slips on to the King's fourth finger the ring or annulum, symbol of royal dignity and of defence of the Christian faith. The lord of the manor of Worksop, the Duke of Newcastle, offers a rich

## THE CEREMONY

glove for the King's right hand in which he is to hold the sceptre that is now given him by the Archbishop, this is the Sceptre with the Cross, the baculum, symbol of royal power and justice. In the King's left hand is placed the Sceptre with the Dove, symbol of equity and mercy.

Now comes the actual coronation, the crowning. The King sits in St. Edward's Chair, and the Archbishop places on his head the crown imperial. At this moment, the peers and Kings-of-Arms lift up their coronets and crown themselves while all the people cry—

“God save the King!”

and trumpets blare as the great guns of the Tower are fired. The quire sings to the thundering of the cannon and the exultant scream of trumpets.

The complete Bible containing the Apocrypha is presented to the King, and he turns to the throne, to the throne of King Edward I that holds beneath its seat, guarded by four lions, the Scottish Stone of Destiny. In old days, the King was actually lifted on to the seat, to-day he is merely assisted into it by the Archbishop, bishops, and peers. The Archbishop then prays that the King might keep his oath by holding fast to the throne on which he sits, he pronounces the benediction, and the *Te Deum* is sung.

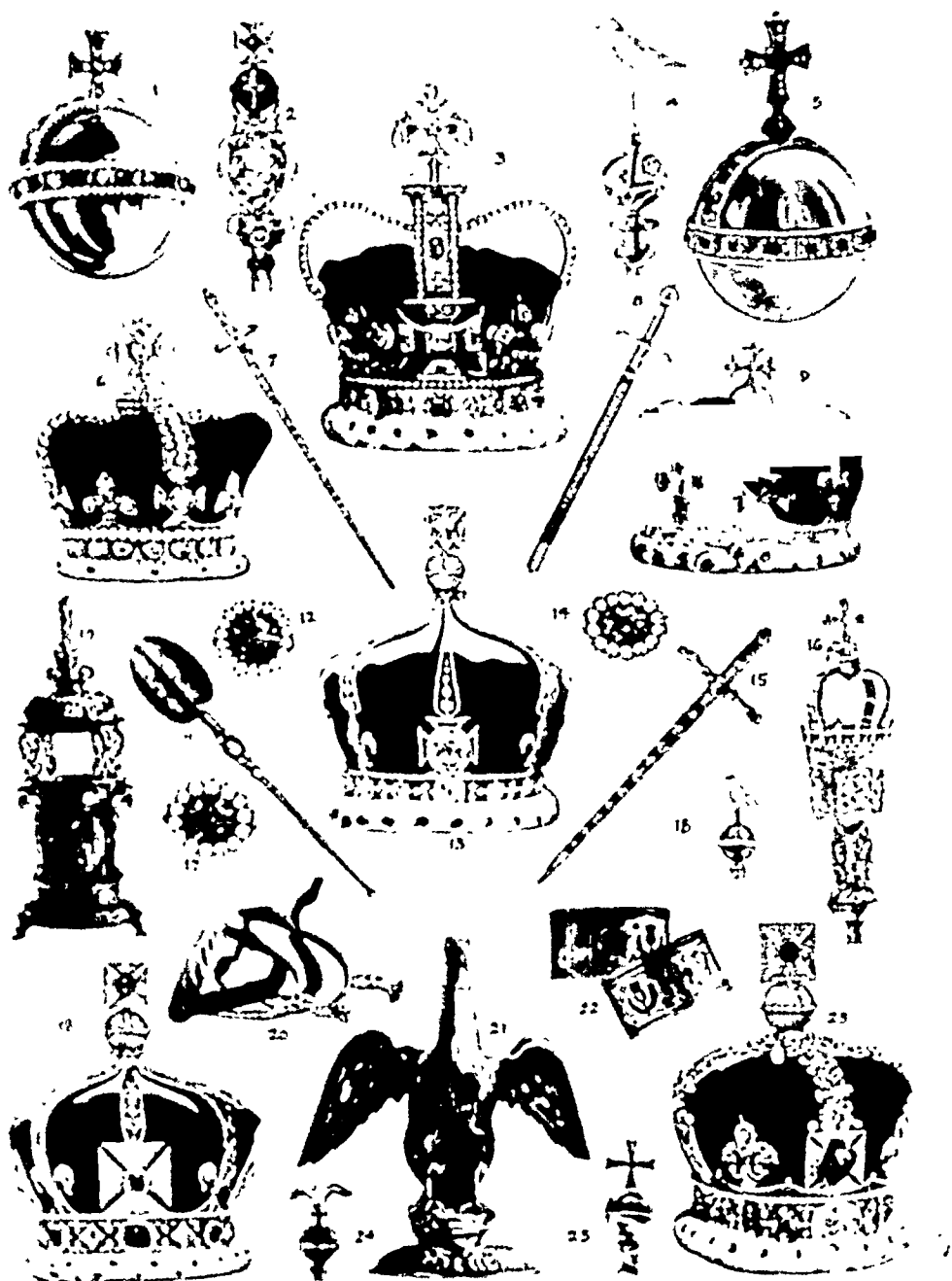
It is time for fealty and homage to be sworn to the King, who has sworn homage to all, to both lay and spiritual, submitting to their demands, himself demanding nothing. Before the throne,

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kneels the Archbishop of Canterbury, who kisses the King's left cheek. Then the heir-presumptive—most probably with George VI his brother the Duke of Gloucester will stand for the Princess Elizabeth—gives homage on behalf of the blood royal, all of whom now kneel, then rise and in turn touch the King's crown and kiss him on the left cheek. Meanwhile the other peers kneel, taking off their coronets, first the dukes, then the marquesses, followed by the earls, the viscounts, the barons. After kneeling, the first of each rank puts off his coronet, and in turn alone ascends to the throne, repeating the words of homage.

The King now offers to the Archbishop the communion of bread and wine—these are brought by two bishops from St. Edward's Chapel—then he kneels making his oblation. He offers a pall of cloth-of-gold and a wedge of gold, a pound in weight. These are placed on the altar by the Archbishop, who afterwards gives communion to the King, himself offering the bread, the Dean the wine. Then the King puts on his crown, takes up the sceptres, and returns to the throne while the quire sings the *Te Deum*.

THE ceremony of the Queen Consort's crowning and inthronisation is simpler than the King's. Her crown is smaller, lighter—the King's is extremely heavy. By actual law a Queen Consort cannot claim the right of coronation, although it is naturally given her, except, of course, in such exceptional cases as that of George IV and his



## THE CORONATION REGALIA

- |                         |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Crown of St. Edward  | 11. Crown of St. Edward | 21. Crown of St. Edward |
| 2. Crown of St. Edward  | 12. Crown of St. Edward | 22. Crown of St. Edward |
| 3. Crown of St. Edward  | 13. Crown of St. Edward | 23. Crown of St. Edward |
| 4. Crown of St. Edward  | 14. Crown of St. Edward | 24. Crown of St. Edward |
| 5. Crown of St. Edward  | 15. Crown of St. Edward | 25. Crown of St. Edward |
| 6. Crown of St. Edward  | 16. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 7. Crown of St. Edward  | 17. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 8. Crown of St. Edward  | 18. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 9. Crown of St. Edward  | 19. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 10. Crown of St. Edward | 20. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 11. Crown of St. Edward | 21. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 12. Crown of St. Edward | 22. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 13. Crown of St. Edward | 23. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 14. Crown of St. Edward | 24. Crown of St. Edward |                         |
| 15. Crown of St. Edward | 25. Crown of St. Edward |                         |





## THE CEREMONY

wretched Caroline. The Archbishop of Canterbury also performs the Queen's crowning: Queen Alexandra was crowned by the Archbishop of York, but this was only by the express permission of the Canterbury primate.

The anointing is not so prolonged for Queen as for King: she is anointed only on the head, a rich canopy of cloth-of-gold being held above her by four peeresses. Then the Coronation Ring, the Seal of Faith, is given to the Archbishop who slides it upon the fourth finger of her right hand. Referring to it as the crown of glory, honour, and joy, the Archbishop raises the Queen's crown and gently places it upon her head. As the crown is lifted, all the peeresses bring up their coronets and crown themselves, their white-gloved arms rising swan-like in one simultaneous most beautiful movement that has thrilled and inspired every one fortunate enough to witness it. The Archbishop next gives the Queen her Sceptre and her Ivory Rod with the Dove, after which she is led to her throne, to the left of the King.

THE solemn ritual is over.

Still carrying their sceptres, King and Queen retire to St. Edward's Chapel to disrobe. The King gives his Sceptre with the Dove to the Archbishop, who places it on the altar there; beside it, the Dean places the spurs and St. Edward's Staff. In a robe of purple velvet, wearing a lighter crown, the King takes the Orb from the Archbishop. With this in his left hand, the Sceptre with the Cross in his right, he passes through the quire to the west

## *CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

door of the Abbey where, with his Queen, he enters upon his second coronation, a simpler, more human coronation—the shouting of the people as he steps into his coach to be driven through the streets of his greatest city—London.

## VIII

### *The Oath*

AFTER the recognition, the acclamation of the people, their acceptance of the new King, the King gives his oath in answer. This is not the Declaration which is a religious matter and, until Edward VII tamed it down, it was a fierce denunciation of Roman Catholicism that was invented to debar the Stuarts from reigning, to make certain that only Protestants could rule in England. The oath is a promise to the people and has always been one of the most important items of the ceremony; after accepting the King, the people will not crown him unless he agrees to follow their demands. Glibly have these oaths been given in the past, and often swiftly have they been forgotten. The Kings bound themselves to lay and spiritual, but it need not be added that the commons were never mentioned in medieval and later times—they were not mentioned in Magna Carta, which is mainly a recapitulation of past oppressions and a determination on the part of both barons and bishops to see that the King rectified them.

To-day the oath is a formula. In a low voice the Archbishop asks the King if he intends to abide by certain laws, and the King answers that he will.

It is a pact, a bond between King and people, something very intimate.

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

THEN there is the Bible that must contain the Apocrypha, and which is later presented to the King by the Archbishop. We first discover this in the coronation of William and Mary. Although previously a Bible had figured in the ceremony, it is at this date—1689—that we find it being given to the King. It was a symbol of the freedom from Rome. We will see later with what joy Queen Elizabeth was presented with a Bible during her state ride from the Tower to the Abbey, but here it was merely an accident, a sudden inspiration of the city to show that the thralldom of Mary's priests was gone, and that from now the Book of God could be printed openly in English and openly read. When a Bible was offered to Charles II on his arrival in England, the spirit of the offering could not have been so genuine as in Elizabeth's case; it was a hint, almost a threat that the popery of the Stuarts would never again be tolerated. Tactful Charles, always ready to compromise, ecstasically answered that it was the one thing he loved most in all the world.

The idea of giving a Bible to the King during coronation was inspired by the similar procedure in the consecration of a bishop. The fact that it must be complete means little, simply a revolt from Rome.

## IX

### *The Anointing*

BEFORE he sits upon the throne, before he is even crowned, the King must be anointed. He must be prepared spiritually for the great trust ahead. In this ceremony are used the ampulla and the spoon. The ampulla contains the holy oil and is formed in the shape of an eagle. For long, our present one was believed to have formed a part of the regalia made for Charles II, but close examination has revealed that it is of much earlier date; some even insist that it is Byzantine. All the same it cannot be doubted that Vyner—who made the regalia for Charles—went over the original eagle with a graver and added portions, particularly the wings and pedestal. This was probably an earlier and less important ampulla than the one sold by the Commonwealth, which was also of gold with pearls and diamonds, its claws resting on lapis lazuli. Our present eagle is of crude workmanship, nine inches high with a wing-stretch of seven inches; it is of solid gold, with a narrow channel to contain a little oil made chiefly of olive oil and balm.

Whatever doubts there might be of the antiquity of the ampulla, there can be none about the spoon into which the oil is poured. The handle is seven and a half inches long, tapering towards the top,

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

ornamented and at one time enamelled, and is set with pearls. The handle dips like a Roman and early Christian spoon where it meets the bowl, it curves abruptly down so that it is actually much higher than the bowl which has a definite Stuart shape, being spade-like. There is a beautiful arabesque design on this bowl, and a ridge rises down its centre, almost forming two bowls. When in 1890, the spoon was examined by the fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, London, "it was by a general consensus of opinion attributed to the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century."<sup>1</sup>

The original ampulla, now gone for ever, was enshrined in a famous legend of the Middle Ages. It was told that St. Thomas Becket when at Sens was vouchsafed a vision of the Virgin Mary who gave him the eagle with a phial of oil, telling him that the fifth King after Henry II would recover Normandy, and would conquer the Holy Land, which shows a prophetic power truly divine, as in those days England had not lost Normandy. St. Thomas hid the treasure where it remained buried until unearthed during the reign of Edward II who asked the Pope for permission to use it. As the Pope shuffled out of a direct answer, the oil was put away until Richard II discovered it in the Tower for his usurper, Henry IV, to use.

In medieval days after the anointing the King's head was swathed in cloth—called a chrismale—and had to remain covered for days so that the divine chrism would soak into the scalp and not a

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. liii. 1892. *The Spoon and its History*, by C. J. Jackson, F.S.A.

## THE ANOINTING

drop be wasted. Anointing then was a thorough affair, but to-day the sign of the Cross only is made with the oil. In former times the Kings usually sat, sometimes they knelt, while Edward VI "lay prostrate." To-day, the King stands.

The anointing does not seem so important to us, yet it remains one of the most vital parts of the ceremony. It is an ancient rite, known to primitive peoples, and Hovedon, the chronicler, tells us that it gives the King glory, fortitude, and knowledge. Before the King can don the kingly garments he must be purified. He has given his oath as a man, as one born of original sin, and of no greater strength and purity than you or I; then must he be anointed, made semi-divine, before the albe of kingship can be clipped around his shoulders.

THE supertunica placed upon the King and the other ecclesiastical parts of the ceremony show its extreme likeness to the consecration of a bishop. The following table will make the similarity very clear:<sup>1</sup>

| CONSECRATION OF A<br>BISHOP  | CONSECRATION OF THE<br>KING   |
|--|---|
| <i>Oath of obedience to the metropolitan see, and examination by the metropolitan.</i> | <i>Oath to observe the laws of St. Edward, and examination by the metropolitan.</i>   |
| <i>Litany, laying on of hands, and "Veni Creator."</i>                                 | <i>"Veni Creator," Collect and Litany. [It is more than probable that the laying on of hands was a part of the earliest coronations.]</i> |

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<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesie Anglicane*, by W. Maskell (London), 1847, vol. iii.; quoted by J. Wickham Legg in his fascinating *The Coronation Order of King James I* (F. E. Robinson), 1902.



# CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

CONSECRATION OF A BISHOP.

CONSECRATION OF THE KING.

*One collect.*

*Four collects.*

*Consecratory Preface.*

*Consecratory Preface.*

*Anointing.*

*Anointing.*

*Vesting with alb, tunicle, and stole.*

*Delivery of the crosier, ring, and mitre, with the Book of the Gospels.*

*Delivery of sword, "pallium regale" or cope, crown, ring, sceptre, and rod. [Also the Bible.]*

*Eucharist.*

*Eucharist.*

AT one time the King was literally the head of the English Church with power over the clergy, but slowly through the Middle Ages, Pope after Pope dragged this power away, until John surrendered every right in desperate attempts to keep his throne. Later Kings fought back, gaining here, losing there, but to-day the connection between Church and State is a slight thing, although the Church still keeps a tenacious grip on the right of sitting in the House of Lords. Nominally it would seem that the King until very recently had control of the Church, for the Crown was vested with the right of ecclesiastical patronage, including archbishops, bishops, deans, and occasionally canons; in truth, however, the Crown did little more than initial the appointments made by the Prime Minister. Even Queen Victoria found herself usually defeated in her attempts to have her

protégés preferred, although she did manage to entice Disraeli into putting through the stupid Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, only to discover how strong had grown high church ideals.

We must thank Edward VII for a great deal of modern religious tolerance. Having Roman Catholic friends he was not going to have them constitutionally insulted, and he altered slightly the form of the coronation oath. Slowly the Church of England has slid from its position in the State, and it was almost severed by George V's enactment of 1919 that gave freedom of preference to a church assembly. This would appear a triumph, but in actuality it showed how religion and royalty were becoming divisible. The Archbishop of Canterbury might prepare thunderbolts for ex-Edward VIII, but no matter what furious outcries he might make, he cannot affect the constitution. He is only a prelate giving a private opinion and, incidentally, helping even further to drive religion from the State, and also from the hearts of the people.

## X

### *The Crowns*

OF all the regalia used at the coronation, the crown and throne would seem the most important, but this merely emphasises the difference between the old and the modern attitudes, for in medieval times the crowning was a kind of incident, the vital part of the ceremony being the anointing. No longer is the coronation a religious rite. It takes place in an abbey and the officiants are churchmen; a Bible figures prominently in the ritual; there is a sermon and church service, but to most of us of the twentieth century this all seems of little importance, a mere appanage to the crowning. The medieval man thought practically the opposite. The *Liber Regalis* speaks of no acclamation at the crowning; to the writer of that work two things in the ceremony are vital—the unction and the inthronisation. We can understand the importance of the latter, but the former no longer touches us with its mystical union of kingship and divinity.

To us, the crown stands forth; it symbolises royalty. When we think of Kings, we think automatically of crowns, thrones, and sceptres, never of holy oil dripping from a phial into a spoon and from a spoon upon the head of a man.

THE original crown had no royal significance; it was a wreath to place around the head of a great

man—of a soldier, an athlete, or a scholar. A chain of flowers and leaves was, in Roman days, woven for the conqueror of a city, symbolising that the earth and the things of that earth now belonged to him. The famous tale, probably apocryphal—it is repeated of many men, including Julius Cæsar—of how William the Bastard slipped as he landed on English earth, and to turn the evil omen into a good augury, cried, “By the splendour of God, I have taken seizin of my kingdom, the earth of England is in my two hands!” is a survival of this custom. Even when the emperors were accepted in Rome, they were never permitted the imperial diadem; they were, however, allowed the crown. The two words have now become practically synonymous, yet originally there was a vast difference between them, for the crown with its bubble of leaves could be given in transient honour; it quickly faded, but the diadem endured. At first it was a band of richly embroidered linen or silk which developed into a flat gold chaplet. From what we can decipher of pre-Norman English coins, it would seem that our Anglo-Saxon Kings had diadems, not crowns. After the conquest, from William I, the crown definitely appears. It would therefore seem that our crown has nothing to do with the ancient one, it is an evolution of the diadem—the gold band has sprouted leaves.

Until the Lancastrians this type of crown existed—a band of metal with variously shaped uprights. The first reference to a modern type is to be found in Froissart’s description of Henry IV’s coronation where the crown is definitely stated to be

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

arched in the shape of a cross. From then the evolution was slow, consisting mainly in variations of the upright bars, some being curved, some being more right-angular, some having thicker circlets, some slimmer, all jewelled and surmounted by a cross.

An examination of past and modern crowns makes one regret this evolution. Until Henry IV, the crowns were simpler, more beautiful. They were not so ostentatious. That of Edward II particularly is a work of splendid craftsmanship and design, and it continued in the same simple form until Henry IV arched it, making the uprights meet. The old open crown was undoubtedly the better of the two.

William I's crown was a plain circlet with four uprights terminating in trefoils, and there was probably little variation with William II's. Henry I added pearls and turned the trefoils into a close resemblance to fleur-de-lis.

Although, from Froissart, it would seem that Henry IV used the modern type, his Canterbury tombs shows the old open form, but with far more ostentatious chasing and jewelling. The first appearance of the arched crown on the royal seal is in the time of Edward IV, 1461.

THE imperial crown of to-day can be seen in the Wakefield Tower of the Tower of London, close to the spot where, it is alleged without the slightest evidence whatever, Henry VI was murdered. It was made for Charles II after the Commonwealth had sold the regalia, and since 1661 all

## THE CROWNS

Kings of England have been crowned with it. Multicoloured gems flash from the gold circlet on which stand fleur-de-lis and crosses patés—a form of Maltese Cross. Out of these spring the two gold arches, bubbling at the edges with great pearls; without these arches the crown would remain a coronet. As the arches cross, the metal sinks, and in this hollow stands a globe of gold that bears a cross snapping with jewels, crusted with heavy drop-shaped pearls, lustrously reflecting the light of gems with sullen beauty. The crown weighs nearly 5 lb. Inside is the purple velvet cap of maintenance, edged with miniver, protecting the King's head from the sharp heavy metal. It was Henry VII who, with his miserly habit of degrading anything to his personal needs, first put the cap of State to such a shameful use. In medieval ages this cap of maintenance was a very dignified and important symbol, worn by the King and by great dignitaries as a sign of official power, and like the Cardinal's red hat, it was carried before the King in processions. Now it has almost disappeared from the royal regalia; it is used chiefly as a cushion under the crown.

THERE have always been many crowns. The King possesses three. The one described above is usually called St. Edward's crown; then there is the Imperial State Crown, and also the Imperial Crown of India. The State Crown now in the Tower was made in 1839 for Queen Victoria, and with various slight alterations has been used by Edward VII and George V. It weighs 39 oz.

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

5 dwts., and carries the Black Prince's ruby, Queen Elizabeth's pearl ear-rings, the Stuart sapphire, St. Edward's sapphire, and the Star of South Africa.

The Crown of India was made for George V when he was crowned Emperor at Delhi in 1912. The Crown of England by law is not allowed outside the British Isles. For that reason, a third crown had to be made for India. This cost £60,000, and the jewels are mainly diamonds—that spitfire of stones seeming to splinter in the light.

WHILE St. Edward's crown is the one placed on the King's head during the ceremony, when he afterwards enters St. Edward's Chapel he exchanges it for the State Crown. The reason for this is not symbolic, it is for personal comfort. The State Crown is much the lighter and therefore will not impose such a strain upon the King when he passes through the city. The variation in shape—to differentiate it as the Imperial from the Royal—is mainly in the arches which do not sink into a hollow when they meet, but slope upwards to the cross-topped monde.

Until the seventeenth century the crown was censed with holy water, thus again emphasising the religious strength of the ceremony.

THE Queen also has three crowns, although one of them is more properly a diadem. There is the crown of Mary of Modena, Mary of Modena's diadem, and the Queen's State Crown. This last is the personal property of Queen Mary, although

three of its huge diamonds probably belong to the State. It is nothing but diamonds, no splash of colour darkens the icy curves; it glitters and moves with the colour of the light around it, a thing of purity, coldly and perfectly chaste. The band, rimmed with small stones, is made of alternate roses and crosses of diamonds, broken at the front by the huge eye of one of the four Stars of Africa. From the band spring up three fleur-de-lis and three crosses patés alternately; they are composed entirely of diamonds, and they branch into six demi-arches gliding in, snake-like, to curl suddenly into a support for the monde which is a ball of diamonds that seem as if a heap of stones had been screwed up in one's hands, and crushed together into one bursting mass of light. Above is a cross paté holding in its heart another of the Stars of Africa, drop-shaped as if ready to melt. In the very centre of the crown, perched on the rim of a cross paté is the famous Koh-i-noor—huge, round, seeming to sweat with its own beauty, a frozen creature slumbering sluggishly and just awakening to blink cat-like at the sun. The history of this stone, the Mountain of Light, is famous, and traditions of bloodshed and treachery cling to it. But unstained, superb in its beauty, it glares now at us from Queen Mary's crown in the Tower of London.

Queen Mary of Modena's crown is quite small. Unlike the present Queen Mary's it does not fit the head, it remains perched on top of it, and it, too, has no touch of colour; it is made entirely of pearls and diamonds. Large diamonds run around the band which is edged with pearls, each one of



## *CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

which is the size of a pea. Diamond crosses patés and fleur-de-lis spring from this band, and two arches break from the crosses patés and are built of pearls and diamonds. Where they cross, there is a small hollow on which rests the diamond-crusted monde.

The diadem is of little importance, but its very simplicity comes almost as a relief; it appeals as a thing of extreme beauty when one turns one's dazzled eyes from the more splendid crowns. It has no arches, it is simply a pearl-edged band of broad gold encrusted with diamonds enclosing a crimson velvet cap.

## XI

### *The Sceptres*

THE Sceptre with the Cross was originally the same as the Orb—or Monde—and stood for the same thing, Christianity dominating the world. Most ancient of symbols, it comes to us from our Saxon Kings, taken by them from Rome. You can see it on the coins of St. Edward. The Sceptre with the Dove will also be found in St. Edward's hand on his Great Seal. That with the Cross has come to mean kingly power: that with the Dove signifies equity and mercy, called by Cranmer, "sceptre with the Holy Ghost on the top."

In the Wakefield Tower are five sceptres. The most important is naturally the King's Royal Sceptre with the Cross, and the next most important, that with the Dove. The three others are the Queen's Sceptre with the Cross, made for Mary of Modena; the Queen's Sceptre with the Dove; and the Queen's Ivory Rod, also made for Mary. Then there is St. Edward's staff also used in the coronation. This is the Rod of Justice. Longer than the sceptres, being four feet seven and a half inches high, it ends with a steel spike as it was intended for a walking-stick, and walking in the ancient days out-of-doors rarely meant walking on paving-stones. It is gold and has a gold globe on top bearing a gold cross; it is said that the original

staff, destroyed by the Commonwealth, contained a scrap of the true cross, but if we could collect all the scraps of the true cross scattered over Europe in the Middle Ages we should have more than enough to build a house. That this staff should be added to the sceptres when it has no more symbolic value may appear unnecessary, but the intention was that it should guide the King's footsteps along the path of justice and equity. Made for the Stuarts, it failed dismally in its purpose.

The Sceptre with the Cross is about three feet long, of gold, and heavy jewelled. It kept its Stuart shape, based on the ancient model, until the reign of Edward VII when he incorporated the largest part of the Star of Africa diamond into the head of the sceptre—a delicate task, as Edward wanted nothing lost of the principal beauty—and, in fact, it added greater beauty and more dignity. The old sceptre was topped with a tall diamond fleur-de-lis supporting an amethyst monde with a cross. The jewellers, under Edward's orders, inserted the huge diamond below the amethyst monde and compressed the fleur-de-lis into an even more attractive shape. The diamond is unbelievably perfect. It is drop-shaped,  $2\frac{5}{16}$  inches long,  $1\frac{1}{16}$  inches wide, and weighs  $516\frac{1}{2}$  carats. It glitters and seems to burn with silver fire, light crinkling over its surface. Four gold clasps grip it and can be opened if necessary to release the fiery prisoner. The splendid amethyst monde above seems dull beside its companion. It rests on an enamelled scroll and is encircled by a band with an arch of gold, rubies, and diamonds. Above the amethyst

## THE SCEPTRES

is the cross of diamonds, holding an emerald in its heart. The butt-end of the sceptre is a sphere covered with jewels and diamonds, seeming as if it had been used to pound up precious stones that still cling to the gold in gaudy profusion. Jewels run up the sloping sceptre from the butt; they blossom out as if the rod were bursting into coloured flame, and this ends in a ring of gems in enamel, above which is the smooth grip terminating in a ring similar to the ring below.

The Sceptre with the Dove is not so rich as the other, lacking the Star of Africa, yet it is rich enough and very beautiful. The white enamelled Dove, symbol of the Holy Ghost, is perched upon a cross, its wings outspread as if prepared to beat the air; out of the white enamel gleam eyes, beak, and feet—all gold. The golden cross on which the bird stands rests on a gold monde ringed with a fillet of diamonds and arched with a similar fillet. A band of diamonds runs beneath the monde, and diamonds seem to drip over the edge, curling down the slope of the sceptre, holding gay gems. In the centre of the sceptre is a ring of enamels and gems, and on top and bottom of the ring is delicate gold open-work with enamels, coloured gems, and diamonds. Another band grips the sceptre farther down. The boss at the foot is held by two rings—one of jewels, the other enamelled.

This sceptre the King holds in his left hand.

THE Queen's Sceptre with the Cross was made for Mary of Modena. It is two feet ten inches long and is of gold, and, unlike the King's, the grip is not

towards the centre but towards its tip above a huge boss sprayed with jewels. The other side of the grip, reaching up beyond the centre of the haft is a lovely tree of open-work in gold, with diamond leaves and flowers. At the top is a double fleur-de-lis rich with diamonds and upholding the gold monde with its band and arch of diamonds. Atop of the monde stands the cross, a diamond in each of its arms, and one to blink from the centre.

The Queen's Sceptre with the Dove is smaller than the King's but is similar in shape. The difference between the two is mainly this: the band and arch of the Queen's monde are broken with gems amongst the diamonds and have red and white enamelled leaves; round the centre of the haft runs a band of rich blue enamel splashed with gems and white enamel; near the foot is another band, one of gold open-work bright with gems and enamel; and from the foot swells a boss of gold, gems, and enamel. Like so much of the regalia, this lovely sceptre disappeared for many years until, in 1814, it was found at the back of a shelf in the Jewel House.

The Queen's Ivory Rod did not disappear, it was sold by the Commonwealth. The present one was made for Mary of Modena, and is a copy of the one so lost. It is three feet one and a half inches long and is of ivory of three pieces, each piece being joined to the next with rings of gold. On top is a gold monde, warmly coloured with *champlevé* enamels; above the monde stands the gold cross on which is perched the dove with golden eyes and beak and feet, like the King's; but, unlike the

## *THE SCEPTRES*

King's, the wings are not open; they are shut as if the bird were clipped in love, content to rest for ever on the cross. At the rod's end is a boss similar to the monde.

The rings used during the coronation are the personal property of each sovereign; those at present in the Tower were made for Queen Mary and His late Majesty King George V.

## XII

### *The Orb*

WHEN the Orb—or Monde—was placed in the firm little hand of Queen Victoria, she asked plaintively, "What am I to do with it?" Lord John Thynne answered, "Your Majesty is to carry it, if you please, in your hand." "Am I?" said Victoria; "it is very heavy." And heavy indeed it is for a girl to hold, for it is six inches in diameter and thick with jewels.

The Orb is an ancient symbol, showing Christ's domination of the earth. There are two in the Tower—one for a King, the other for a Queen. William and Mary were the reason for this, for, as they were crowned together, a second orb was necessary. The Queen's is much smaller and lighter than the King's and will be used by Queen Elizabeth. Victoria had to carry the heavy one. This is a golden ball, encircled by a fillet of gold, the edges of which are of pearls holding clusters of diamond-ringed gems set in borders of white and red enamel. The centre stones of each cluster are great rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. A similar fillet runs across the top of the Orb, arching to meet the fillet below. There is a huge bright amethyst on top of the globe, one and a half inches high, faceted all over. It supports a tall diamond-edged cross patés resting on a collar of diamonds above

## THE ORB

the amethyst. In the centre of the cross on one side is an emerald, on the other a sapphire blinking from a ruff of diamonds. Diamonds run along the edges of the arms, down the centres of the arms; and at the ends of the arms are large pearls, glittering like heavy drops of dew, and pearls nestle within each inner corner of the cross.

Like practically all the present regalia, the Orb was made for Charles II.

The Queen's Orb is a smaller, less gorgeous, copy of the King's. It is of gold, with a band and arch of alternately circular and octagonal rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, ridged with pearls. The cross is gay with rubies, sapphires, and diamonds.



### XIII

#### *The Swords and the Spurs*

THERE is no deep symbolic meaning in the splendid Sword of State, a jewelled and gorgeous weapon. The King is now a soldier, and as a soldier he takes this sword from the bishops, is girded with it, then surrenders it in the service of the Church from whom it is redeemed for the paltry sum of a hundred shillings. Beautiful though this sword undoubtedly is, any knight who tried to wield it would rip his palms to rags on the jewels; but it is a symbol—a symbol not so much of war as of courage.

The Spurs must enter the same category as the Sword; they are a symbol of knighthood. The pair used in the coronation are of medieval form although fashioned for Charles II; they are prick-spurs without rowels, ending in a sharp point, and are of solid gold, richly chased and have straps of crimson velvet embroidered with gold. They, like the Sword, are offered at the altar and later redeemed. This custom which seems so peculiar is based in tradition. Arms were not allowed within a church in medieval times, even wretched murderers seeking sanctuary had to fling their weapons aside before entering. The slayers of Thomas Becket at first left their swords and axes outside, hoping perhaps to lure Becket into the open, and later they had to return and fetch them

## THE SWORDS AND THE SPURS

before killing him. Apparently the sacrilege of disturbing a church with a sword or axe was more frightening than the killing of an archbishop. Until the last fatal moments, the murderers' piety was such that they did their best to drag Becket outside the walls so as not to desecrate God's house with his blood. A worshipper entering a church in the Middle Ages left his weapons with an attendant at the door, and he had to buy them back again on going out. This custom is recalled in the coronation.

There are two Swords of State: the lovely weapon used in the ceremony and a long two-handled sword with a thirty-two foot blade, two inches broad. This is used at the opening of parliament and is the one with which George V knighted Edward VIII when creating him a Knight of the Garter. It is a far less valuable weapon than the one used in the coronation, which is the most valuable sword in the world. The grip of the latter is composed entirely of diamonds, heaped together like crushed ice. Because of the glare and mass of the stone it is difficult to follow their design of oak leaves and acorns. What these symbolise is uncertain. One theory would commemorate Charles II hiding in an oak tree when the parliament men were hunting him; another would enshrine the oak as typifying England. On top of the grip is a great four-sided diamond with giant rubies on each side, and below these a double row of emeralds and diamonds. The quillons, split with a square scabbard, are so thick with diamonds that you can barely see the gold beneath, and at the tip of each quillon is a lion's head made of tiny close-set

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

diamonds. The slim blade itself is very valuable, being made of the finest tempered steel of Damascus. The sheath is of later date, being made for George IV, at which time many of the jewels were added. This sheath is of dull gold, thickly sprinkled with jewels. At the top, a sapphire, a ruby, two diamonds, and a yellow sapphire—a rare, exceedingly valuable stone—make a cross around which are laurel sprays of diamonds. Then comes the Rose of England for which the soft glow of a ruby makes the heart, surrounded by diamonds; next, Scotland's Thistle of rubies, emeralds, and diamonds; next, Ireland's Shamrock of emeralds. Again in the same order, Rose, Thistle, Shamrock; and for a third time, the three are repeated as the sheath tapers to a point to end with an oblong turquoise set in diamonds.

This sword, of such value that its price cannot be reckoned when the emerald alone between the quillons is worth £2700, was once actually lost. It was in the time of Queen Victoria when the Keeper of the Regalia, contemplating the eternity of her reign, probably decided that there never would be any more use for it. At any rate, it disappeared, and nobody noticed how or when, or even knew that it had gone. It was found by accident, in a disused cupboard. As it was kept in a box resembling a gun-case, nobody had bothered to investigate. This case has a groove for a second sword which apparently has gone for ever. It may turn up some time, but at any rate we can console ourselves with the thought that it was most probably less valuable than the one discovered.

## THE SWORDS AND THE SPURS

That sword has a knack of disappearing. It did not turn up for William IV's coronation, and nobody could find it for George III's. They had to borrow one from the Lord Mayor, and the King, a great stickler for formality, was very aggrieved. On entering the Abbey, however, the sword was seen to have got there before them, for it was lying on the altar. It was on this occasion that Lord Effingham, Deputy Marshal, made the supremely tactless remark when remonstrated with by the solemn King, "It is true, sir; but I have taken care that the next coronation shall be regulated in the exactest manner possible." But then, it might have been supreme wit. One cannot tell.

Besides the Sword of State, three other swords are used in the coronation. First, there is Curtana, Sword of Mercy, also called the Sword of St. Edward the Confessor, which, with the other two, was sent by the Pope to Henry VIII, together with that high-sounding title Defender of the Faith, of which Henry proved himself so worthy. The one thing that differentiates Curtana is that about six inches of its tip have been snapped off to show the element of Mercy. It is otherwise exactly like the other two, having a straight, flat, broad blade. The others represent Temporal and Spiritual Justice.

## XIV

### *The Throne*

THERE is a peculiar type of mind that wishes to leave something of itself behind, even if it is a reputation for infamy, and probably this queer desire has instigated more than a few murders. I would cheerfully pardon all murderers if I could have the delight of hanging the villains who, inspired by this abominable lust, have desecrated with initials not only some of the lovely alabasters in Westminster Abbey, but also, armed with sharp penknives, have laid their desecrating hands upon the throne of England itself. There it stands in the Abbey church, proclaiming with its pock-marked surface the initials of generations of criminals. Would that they could be caught, if still living! With their capture I would like to revive one or two of the customs of the days when that throne was first chopped out with an adze; they had good, healthy customs for people wilfully placing themselves outside all hope of sympathy. Boiling in oil was one of them, if I remember rightly. Gladly would mine be the hand to light that fire, and mine the ears to listen to the lobster-like screams from that stew of infamy within. We might include the Office of Works of 1887 in that pot, for those zealous officials most brutally varnished the wood,

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## THE THRONE

but that at least has given employment for those trying to scrape the varnish off again.

Yes, there in the Abbey is the throne, built by Edward I, enclosing within it the lions of England, the Scone Stone of Scotland, and there also remain the only mementoes of criminals—their names and initials.

EDWARD I built this chair particularly to guard that crude block of red sandstone which he seized in Scotland. In June 1296, Edward entered Edinburgh Castle, and he came out with three coffers of treasure; then, in August, he entered the Abbey of Scone and came out with the "fatal stone" enclosed in a chair. This stone was said to have been the cushion on which Jacob rested at Beth-el and watched the coloured angels ascend to and descend from heaven. From Beth-el it travelled to Egypt, from Egypt to Spain, from Spain to Ireland, and from Ireland into Scotland. It was believed, and King Kenneth II engraved the belief upon a plate fixed to its surface, that with this stone would travel the sceptre of Scotland:

*Ne fallat fatum Scoti quocunque locatum  
invenit lapidem regnare tenentur ibidem.*

*[Unless fate's against them, Scots hold sway  
where they find this stone and its call obey.]*

James I brought the prophecy to truth, although—  
as revealed by Dr. Foxley Norris, the present Dean  
of Westminster—the modern Scottish nationalists,  
having seized the alleged sword of William Wallace,

were recently only frustrated by Scotland Yard from triumphantly dragging their stone back to the north.

AFTER stealing the precious relic from Scotland, Edward considered making a chair to fit it. His first idea was to build one of brass to be used by the celebrant at Mass, but he changed his mind and instead, in 1300, paid one hundred shillings to one Master Adam for a wooden seat, and 13s. 4d. for carving, painting, and gilding two small leopards in wood. These leopards have disappeared; the lions under the chair to-day are comparatively modern, as also is the step.

In its present tragic state it is difficult to reconstruct the beauty of Edward's original royal chair when it was patterned in gesso and gold, was bright with jewels and probably soft with padding. A microscope is needed to decipher faint outlines of old ornamentation, and vandals' penknives have wrought destruction upon what little had remained after centuries.

Not only have vandals and Scottish nationalists greedily eyed the ancient throne, but on June 11, 1914, it almost went for ever. A bomb was discovered fixed to one of the crockets. Luckily, small damage was done.

ON this throne will King George VI be seated, King of England, over the Scottish Lia Fail. In the early days at their coronations, Kings were actually lifted into the seat—a memory of the times when soldiers raised their leaders on their

## THE THRONE

shields. And seated in Edward I's chair, the King is told that he must stand fast and hold firm, while under him rests the magic pillow of Jacob, that more than ancient symbol.

Saxon rulers were lifted not on to a chair but on to a stone, a ritual that is still recalled in the name of Kingston-on-Thames. Nor should it be forgotten that when brave Jack Cade entered London with the commons of England, he tapped with his sword the mystic London Stone still to be seen behind its grille at the Church of St Swithin, Cannon Street, and cried, "Now is Mortimer lord of this city!"

Since King Edward I's painter, Master Walter, fashioned the leopards for this chair, since the hands of medieval craftsmen tenderly adzed the shaggy edges of the oak and carved on its surface intricate beautiful designs, the throne has been the seat of all our Kings. Only once did it leave the Abbey, when for Cromwell it was carried into nearby Westminster Hall so that he could be inaugurated Lord Protector of the realm, sitting "under a prince-like canopy of state." The power of the throne was so great a symbol that even Cromwell had to bow to it and accept it to make his rule secure.



## XV

### *Fealty and Homage*

FEALTY is given by the religious, homage by the lay barons. To quicken the ceremony, it was arranged for Edward VII as he was still weak from his operation that the Archbishop of Canterbury should represent the religious; the heir to the throne the other members of the royal house; and the senior peer of each rank the lesser members of his rank. This was continued at George V's coronation, and will certainly be followed at George VI's. And it shows the extreme religious tolerance of Protestant England that our premier peer, the Duke of Norfolk, should be the head of the most powerful Roman Catholic house in England.

With the other bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury kneels before the King and offers fealty. He says, according to the old formula still untouched: "I, N., Archbishop of M., will be faithful and true, and faith and truth bear unto you our sovereign lord and your heirs, Kings [and Queens] of England [Great Britain, etc.]; and I shall do and truly acknowledge the lands which I claim to hold of you, as in right of the church. So help me God." He then stands up and kisses the King's left cheek; he is followed by

## FEALTY AND HOMAGE

the officiating bishops, who each kiss the King's left cheek.

The oath of homage is richer sounding, more medieval. The peers kneel before the King; first kneels and swears the premier duke; after him come marquess, earl, viscount, and baron. In turn each touches the King's crown and kisses his left cheek, after placing his hands inside the King's and giving homage in these words: "I, N., Duke [or Marquess, etc.] of M., become your liege man of life and limb and of earthly worship; and faith and truth shall bear unto you, to live and die against all manner of folk. So help me God."

It will be noted that fealty stresses mainly the question of land, it does not acknowledge royal power above the power of the Church; homage offers itself completely. The lord is prepared to give his lands, his possessions, his life in the service of the King.

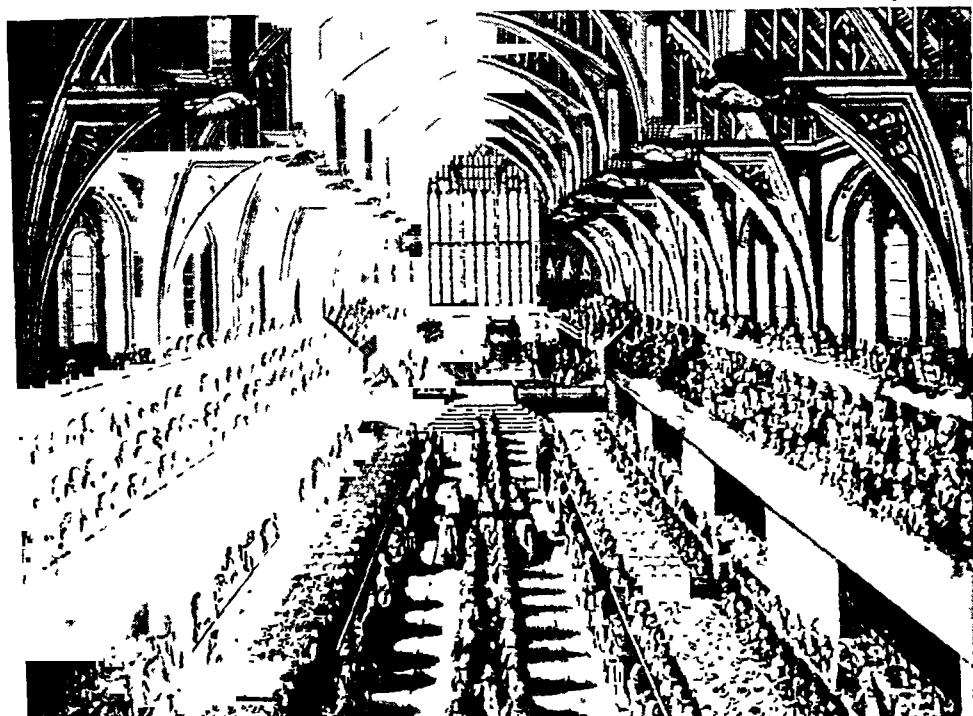
Both lay and clerical are uncovered during fealty and homage.

THERE is one interesting point in George VI's coronation. The heir to the throne is little Princess Elizabeth, and naturally a woman cannot give homage, although she may receive it. The words would become meaningless in her mouth. It is most likely that the Princess's uncle, Henry Duke of Gloucester, will offer homage on behalf of the other members of the royal house.

## XVI

### *The King's Champion*

It is sad that splendid customs should die. There are none to mourn the passing of the King's Jester, and no longer do the Barons of the Cinque Ports and the two Ancient Towns of Rye and Winchelsea uphold the rich silken canopy above their King; when the barons applied at Edward VII's coronation for the ceremony to continue, they were told that if it should be "His Majesty's pleasure to have a canopy then the Barons of the Cinque Ports are entitled to bear it." Apparently it was not the King's pleasure, for there was no canopy at Edward VII's coronation and there will be none at George VI's: it was also absent at George V's. Yet it is an ancient custom and most impressive. The canopy used to be of cloth-of-gold or purple silk and was carried on four lances or staves ringing with tiny silver-gilt bells. The custom ceased after the coronation of George IV and has not since been revived. The Cinque Port Barons in medieval days had another right, that of carrying the King ashore on their shoulders, struggling through the surf, when he landed in England. And while speaking of old dead customs, that which strikes many of us as the most heart-breaking is the loss of free drink, for in the Middle Ages the conduits of London spouted wine, and beggars could



*By courtesy of the British Museum.*

## A PROSPECT OF THE INSIDE OF WESTMINSTER HALL

The serving of the first course of hot meats to King James II and  
Queen Mary of Modena.



be as drunk as lords and shout with gusto for their King. There is not even free beer nowadays. That custom has vanished into the past, together with the great canopy sagging above the King's head as the Barons of the Cinque Ports moved slowly forward.

And there is another custom that yet clings a little, stripped of its splendour—the right of the King's Champion. To-day he is dressed like a herald, but in the Middle Ages and later he clanked in full steel, helmeted, ready for battle; during the Westminster Hall banquet—also gone—that followed the coronation ceremony, the challenger would ride in, his horse trampling the sap from rushes, while servitors darted aside. Loudly the Champion would shout, sword ready, "If any person, of what degree soever, high or low, shall deny or gainsay our sovereign lord —, King of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, son and next heir of our sovereign lord —, the last King deceased, to be right heir to the imperial crown of this realm of Great Britain, or that he ought not to enjoy the same; here is his Champion, who saith that he lieth, and is a false traitor, being ready in person to combat with him; and in this quarrel will adventure his life against him, on what day soever shall be appointed." When, in 1399, Sir Thomas Dymock of Scrivelsby, King's Champion in right of the house of Marmion, clanked into the hall with a jingle of harness and slap of armour-plates, and shouted his challenge, the new King, Henry IV, turned with a smile. "If need were, Sir Thomas," said he, "I would

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in mine own person ease thee of this duty." It was no idle boast. Henry was a determined fighter and a brave errant-knight before he wrenched the throne from under fickle girlish Richard II.

Sir Charles Dymock in 1685 was the unconscious instrument of prophecy, and a very unfortunate and embarrassed one he must have been. Before the court of James II he flung his challenge at the diners, uplifting his scintillating unblooded sword; and as he shouted, his horse somehow stumbled and sent the wretched Sir Charles flat on his back in the centre of the hall to lie like a beetle, pinned down in the crustacean-like steel. "See you, love," cried James's Queen, Mary of Modena, "what a weak Champion you have!"

THIS custom of the Champion is deep-rooted in medieval history. It derives from the ancient Trial by Ordeal. Jurists of the early days were too astute to trust their fellow-men, they often gave the judgment to God. There were various methods of testing the rights of a medieval case. If you relied on man you underwent trial by purgation, you produced a jury of men—the number varied according to the magnitude of the crime—who swore to your innocence. If unable to do this, you threw yourself on the judgment of God and underwent trial by ordeal. The chief four of these were ordeal by hot iron, by hot water, by cold water, and by battle. The accused in the first had to carry a pound weight of hot iron for three paces; his hand was then bandaged and was examined three days afterwards. If the skin had healed he was

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innocent, if it was marked he was doomed. Hot water ordeal was, naturally, not so popular, being more difficult to fake: the accused plunged his hand into a pot of boiling water and drew out a stone. The cold water ordeal was perhaps the safest; they threw you into a river or pond. If the water rejected you, you were guilty; if you sank, you were dragged ashore and declared innocent. The fourth ordeal, that of battle, is the basis of the King's Champion, and was never a popular method in England. You hired a champion who fought it out with another champion and whoever killed the other proved his master's innocence. There was too much corruption in this method: poor men had no hope against the rich who could always hire the greatest bullies.

Naturally these champions were well-paid, and the King's Champion at coronations had his wages too, if he should earn them. Horse, saddle, armour, and appurtenances were his reward should he battle in the King's cause, but as there is no record of any one being either lunatic or courageous enough to accept the gage, no champion ever won his payment.

As with the Barons of the Cinque Ports and their canopy, George IV's coronation was the last to which the shining champion came to cry his defiance to the people.



## XVII

### *History of the Regalia*

THE regalia, all the insignia of royalty, is kept in the Wakefield Tower of the Tower of London. There, from behind the glass, it glitters at you with snakes' eyes—bright and living. So many jewels numb one's mind; it is impossible to absorb their beauty or to conceive their worth. There, an arm's reach off, is greater wealth than any millionaire could dream of, richer beauty than blinded the startled gaze of Ali Baba. It has not always been stored in the Wakefield Tower; for a time it rested in the Martin Tower—where *Bolleyn* can be seen scratched into the stone of one wall, the work of that brave tragic man, George Boleyn, Anne's brother—and before then it was kept in the now disappeared Jewel House, a set of medieval buildings that ran to the south almost parallel to the great White Tower at the time when the King's and Queen's apartments existed before Cromwell and Charles II tore them down. Yet, even before then, some of the regalia was stored at Westminster Abbey until the thefts became so outrageous that Edward I moved it to the Tower of London.

This great medieval theft of the Crown jewels was an extraordinary affair, and the truth has not

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yet been sifted from the lies. We have our confession, but it is a braggart work, and the details given do not quite fit the facts. According to this confession, by a certain rascal called Richard of Pudlicott, the robbery occurred on the evening of April 24, 1303. Richard was a clerk—a clerkswoman—who became merchant and visited Ghent and Bruges in 1298, dealing in wool; but the King, Edward I. had promised more than he could ever repay. His debts in Flanders were such, that the King had to avoid the country, with the result that merchants like Pudlicott were seized in his stead as surety for the debt. Somehow Pudlicott escaped, losing all his Flandish goods, and arrived in London with nothing to keep him alive but his own rage at such treatment, for which, naturally enough, he blamed the King. He lived in London, but he haunted Westminster with his petitions, and thus he met his fellow-roguers, including a great many of the monks. Pudlicott was a man with a grievance and with the courage—or is it stupidity?—to revenge that grievance. According to his own account, alone he robbed the treasury, but he was obviously a liar. Half the convent of Westminster must have been in the plot or it would never have succeeded.

In those days the royal treasure was not kept in one place. A great deal of it followed the King, which explains why John lost so much wealth in the quicksands of the Wash; and one of the most important storehouses was apparently the Abbey, perhaps because it was a sanctuary, and therefore considered immune from thieves. The crypt under-

neath the Chapter-house was stacked with Edward's treasure, and Richard of Pudlicott, hot with fury at the loss of his goods, decided to take a little of that treasure for himself. His difficulty was that the crypt, although not intended as a treasury, was a most inaccessible place, its one entrance being from the church itself, close to the sacristy. But it must be remembered that one of Pudlicott's closest friends was the sacrist, Adam of Warfield. Later, stolen property was found in Adam's possession.

Pudlicott tells us—and here he is by no means convincing—that he decided to burrow through the very walls of the Abbey. The Abbey walls are stout medieval structures, not the kind of flimsy modern erections for which a rusty nail would be an adequate tool; if Pudlicott did that job without being seen or heard, he was a genius. He stated that, to hide his progress, he sowed hemp-seed in the churchyard to cover the hole; but hemp does not spring up in a night, particularly when sown at Christmas. He also said that a butcher who used the yard for grazing his cattle was told that his privilege was withdrawn, and travellers were ordered to walk another way. These facts were corroborated during the trial, so that the work was probably done from both outside and inside. Pudlicott tells us, with romantic gusto, that after he had bored laboriously through the wall on April 24, he entered the crypt, and the massed jewels so blinded him that he lay almost stunned and in his simple ecstasy was unable to drag his eyes away from the twinkling beauty

## HISTORY OF THE REGALIA

until the morning of the 26th. As the crypt must have been very dark, the jewels must have been very bright to illuminate so great a room for so long a time; even if Pudlicott had brought enough candles to last him out, he must have been a bold fellow to use them when their yellow web of light glittering through the hole behind the hemp would have been enough to draw the curiosity of any passer-by. On the morning of the 26th, Pudlicott tells us that he dragged himself from the hypnotic twinkling of the gay jewels and took with him a splendid armful, half of which he apparently dropped on the way.

The whole tale is preposterous, and was undoubtedly concocted to shield his accomplices. It cannot be doubted that Adam the sacrist, helped Pudlicott to smash a way in from inside, then they probably broke a hole in the wall through which they could pass the booty to friends in the churchyard. For to hold a burglary to be carried out in so open a place as a church in the Middle Ages—a very busy period owing to the few interests of the community, and the overcrowded housing—is literally impossible unless nearly all the neighbours were in the game; and in this case, not only the whole town, but half the Abbey. It was a wholesale affair on a grand scale, and Pudlicott was probably the engineer of it as well as the scapegoat.

A fisherman was the first to discover evidence of the crime. In the Thames, instead of the arched silver back of a fish, he netted a solid silver goblet, holding it in the moonlight. Then passers-by

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stumbled over plate and jewels in St. Margaret's Churchyard, Westminster; they found them pushed up behind tombstones, or shoved into bushes. From Westminster the trail of gold and silver and jewels lengthened to distant Kentish Town, while outlandish coins appeared on the stalls of merchants in London and even in York, where the King then was. And the tale was whispered that a gay lady of accommodating temperament and opulent charms—the daughter of one William Russell—had indolently and insolently flashed a jewelled ring in the eyes of her friends—a present, she said, from Dom Adam the sacrist, “so that she should become his friend.”

With the thieves behaving in so reckless a manner, flinging queer coins on to the barrels of wine-shops and jewels into the laps of pretty ladies, detection was inevitable. The King was still determined to be the Hammer of the Scots, having stolen their Stone of Destiny, and was then in Scotland, but he appointed a special commission to investigate the affair. On June 20, a formal examination of the crypt was made, and the robbery was exposed. A thorough search soon brought to light much of the missing property, some being found beneath the beds of the Keeper of the Palace and his assistant, some in the home of Pudlicott and his wench, Joan, daughter of Richard Picard, some in the rooms of Dom Adam the sacrist and his brother monks and their servants. A great deal was also returned by people who had chanced on odds and ends; actually, when accounting was made, it was found that very

## *HISTORY OF THE REGALIA*

little had been lost, but nearly everybody possibly associated with the crime was arrested, including Richard of Pudlicott and the whole convent of the Abbey, with the abbot and forty-eight monks, all being lodged in the Tower of London.

In medieval times you could not arrest monks. One of the great quarrels all through this period was between the King and the clergy, the King struggling to make all justice purely royal, and the clergy insisting that none but themselves should judge themselves. Edward could do no harm to the abbot and his flock; he could only scare them, yet he was determined on some revenge. He managed to hang at least the Keeper of the Palace, and five others lay accused in March 1304, nearly a year after the burglary. It was realised, however, that Pudlicott and Adam the sacrist were the two chief rogues, and both were clerks; then Pudlicott for some idiotic reason made his incredible confession, and took the entire blame. His vanity perhaps prompted this, the desire to strut before his fellows, that Macheathean failing that most of us possess and which creates so many criminals. For more than two years after the burglary he was permitted to live, probably because his accomplice-monks fought to rescue him as he had once been shaved for the tonsure; Edward, however, was no weak King. He hanged Pudlicott, and he moved the jewels to the Tower: he had had enough of the honour of monks.

SINCE then the Tower has remained the guardian of the regalia, except when it is taken from the

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

case to deck a King. The jewels of to-day are not the jewels that Pudlicott gloated over, and which struck him blind that night he crawled—according to his own tale—from the moonlight into darkness made alive. Only the spoon and possibly the ampulla remain; the rest was sold by the Commonwealth, resolute to destroy all vestiges of royalty. At the same time, the secrecy of the sale suggests more than a little a suspicion of graft; and the prices realised convince one that many of the parliament were more eager to stuff their pockets than to rid the State of idolatrous emblems. Here is a list of the chief portions of the regalia with estimated value :

*A true and perfect inventory of all the plate and jewels now being in the upper Jewel House of the Tower, in the charge of Sir Henry Mildmay, together with an appraisement of them, made and taken the 13th, 14th, and 15th days of August 1649:*

|   |   |      |      |
|---|---|------|------|
| <i>The Imperial crown of massy gold, weighing</i>                                       |   |      |      |
| 7 lb. 6 oz., valued at . . . . .  | £ | 1110 | 0 0  |
| <i>The queen's crown of massy gold, weighing</i>  |   |      |      |
| 3 lb. 10 oz. . . . .  |   | 338  | 3 4  |
| <i>A small crown found in an iron chest, formerly in the Lord Cottington's charge .</i> |   | 73   | 16 8 |
| <i>The gold, the diamonds, rubies, sapphires, etc. . . . .</i>                          |   | 355  | 0 0  |
| <i>The globe, weighing 1 lb. 5½ oz. . . . .</i>   |   | 57   | 10 0 |
| <i>Two coronation bracelets weighing 7 oz. (with three rubies and twelve pearls) .</i>  |   | 36   | 0 0  |
| <i>Two sceptres, weighing 18 oz. . . . .</i>  |   | 60   | 0 0  |
| <i>A long rod of silver gilt, 1 lb. 5 oz. . . . .</i>                                   |   | 4    | 10 8 |

*The forementioned crowns, since ye inventory was taken, are according to ord<sup>r</sup> of par[lia]m<sup>t</sup> totally broken and defaced.*

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*The inventory of that part of the regalia which are now removed from Westminster Abbey to the Jewel House in the Tower.*

|   |     |    |     |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| Queen Edith's crown, formerly thought to be of massy gold, but, upon trial, found to be of silver gilt; enriched with garnets, foul pearl, sapphires, and some odd stones, poiz. 50½ oz., valued at . . . | £16 | 0  | 0   |
| King Alfred's crown of gold wire-work, set with slight stones, poiz. 79½ oz. at £3 per oz. . . . .  | 248 | 10 | 0   |
| A gold plate dish, enamelled, etc. . . . .  | 77  | 11 | 0   |
| One large glass cup, wrought in figures, etc. . . . .   | 102 | 15 | 0   |
| A dove of gold, set with stones and pearl, poiz. 8½ oz., in a box set with studs of silver gilt. . . . .  | 26  | 0  | 0   |
| The gold and stones belonging to a collar of crimson and taffety, etc. . . . .  | 18  | 15 | 0   |
| One staff of black and white ivory, with a dove on the top, with binding and foot of gold . . . . .   | 4   | 10 | 0   |
| A large staff with a dove on y <sup>e</sup> top, formerly thought to be all gold, but upon trial found to be, the lower part wood within and silver gilt without . . . . .                                | 2   | 10 | 0   |
| Two scept <sup>r</sup> s one set with pearls and stones, the upper end gold, the lower end silver. The other silver gilt with a dove, formerly thought gold . . . . .                                     | 65  | 16 | 10½ |
| One silver spoon gilt, poiz. 3 oz. . . . .  | 0   | 16 | 0   |
| The gold of the tassels of the liver-coloured robe, weight 4 oz., valued at £8, and the coat with the neck button of gold, £2, the robe having some pearl, valued at £3—in all . . . . .                  | 13  | 0  | 0   |
| One pair of silver gilt spurs, etc. . . . .   | 1   | 13 | 4   |

*All these according to order of Parliament are broken and defaced.*



# CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

We also have a list of the old coronation robes drawn up at the same time:

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>One common taffety robe, very old, valued at .</i>   | <i>£0 10 0</i>        |
| <i>One robe, laced with gold lace . . . . .</i>   | <i>0 10 0</i>         |
| <i>One liver-coloured silk robe, very old, and<br/>worth nothing . . . . .</i>                  | <i>0 0 0</i>          |
| <i>One robe of crimson taffety, sarcenet, valued<br/>at . . . . .</i>                           | <i>0 5 0</i>          |
| <i>One pair of buskins, cloth-of-silver and<br/>silver stockings, very old, and valued at .</i> | <i>0 2 6</i>          |
| <i>One pair of shoes of cloth-of-gold, at .</i>   | <i>0 2 6</i>          |
| <i>One pair of gloves embroid<sup>ed</sup> w<sup>th</sup> gold, at .</i>                        | <i>0 1 0</i>          |
| <i>Three swords with scabbards of cloth-of-gold,<br/>at . . . . .</i>                           | <i>3 0 0</i>          |
| <i>One old comb of horn, worth nothing<sup>1</sup> .</i>  | <i>0 0 0</i>          |
| <i>Total in the chest . . . . .</i>   | <i><u>£4 11 0</u></i> |

WHEN Charles II came to the throne there were desperate efforts to gather regalia enough for his coronation, but all that could be unearthed were apparently the spoon and the ampulla; and the ampulla without doubt was a second-rate affair, not the ancient one used by Henry IV and to which was attached the legend of St. Thomas Becket and the Virgin Mary. Sir Robert Vyner, the Court Jeweller, was commissioned to reconstruct the old regalia, and as closely as he could he tried to copy the crown, the sceptres, and all else sold by the Commonwealth. But the works of Vyner would not be recognised to-day. The monarchs who followed Charles added to the regalia,

<sup>1</sup> This horn comb, worth nothing, was probably the one used to rearrange the King's hair after anointing.

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improving it, inserting jewels, until now the collection is one of the wealthiest in the world.

But the new regalia of Charles II was not long to remain in peace. As the monks of Westminster with foolhardy Richard of Pudlicott had burrowed through the stone of the Abbey in Edward I's day, so did Colonel Blood wheedle and bribe his way into the Tower in the reign of Charles II.

COLONEL BLOOD was a soldier-of-fortune, a brave rogue who would sell his sword to any bidder. Of good Irish family, Blood—a J.P. at twenty-two—in his time had fought for Charles I., for Cromwell, and again for Charles, and had driven a fierce conspiracy against the Duke of Ormonde for which by some miracle he escaped the hanging he deserved. Soldier, conspirator, and next divine, he donned the Roman Catholic or the Protestant garb as occasion needed. Apparently he was a spy for the Crown, but he was a spy for whomever would pay enough, and the amazing climax to his theft suggests that he might possibly have learned dangerous State secrets. This theft is the great exploit that has carved Blood's name in history; without it he would have remained little more than an obscure rogue and soldier-of-fortune, the attempted brutal murderer of Ormonde.

He was about fifty years of age when, in May 1671, he carried out the astounding adventure. The Master of the Jewel House was then Sir Gilbert Talbot, and as his allowance had been reduced, he was compensated by the right to show the regalia to any one who would pay to see

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

it. Sir Gilbert appointed an old servant, Talbot Edwards, to look after the jewels—which were kept in a recess in the stone wall, guarded by caged doors opening outwards—and Edwards must have been a very simple fellow—or perhaps Blood was a very persuasive one—to have been deceived so easily. Three weeks before the robbery, Blood arrived at the Tower disguised as a clergyman; with him he brought a wench whom he introduced as his wife. On being shown the jewels, this “wife” had “a qualm upon her stomach,” and Mrs. Edwards revived her with a cordial: thereby were pleasant relations established—Blood proved himself a compassionate husband, and Mrs. Edwards felt the normal affectionate superiority any one would feel towards a sick lady. The couple left, promising to return shortly. A few days later, Blood appeared, burbling with gratitude, and presented Mrs. Edwards with a pair of gloves. The friendship was now firm, and Blood did not delay long before he unwound his subtle plot. He had, he said to Edwards, a young nephew with three hundred a year in land whom he wished to see settled, and as Edwards had a pretty young gentlewoman for daughter, why shouldn’t they make a match of it? Edwards was delighted. Blood remained to dine, and gave a most pious grace to the meal; after which, on going round the Tower, he noticed a brace of pistols on the wall. Being a man who cautiously prepared for all emergencies, he did his best to buy those pistols, but failed.

There was a great flurrying in the Martin Tower when the day drew near for Blood’s nephew

## HISTORY OF THE REGALIA

to view, and to be viewed by the rarest of the Tower jewels, that pretty young gentlewoman, Mistress Edwards. She was dressing in a gown specially made for the occasion when, on May 9, at seven in the morning, Blood rode to St. Catherine's Wharf, that strip of land between moat and river; he was still in his clerical garb, but the four who rode with him were dressed as gallants. There was Blood's son-in-law, Tom Hunt; the spy, Edward Parrot, who nicknamed himself Lieutenant; a third unnamed rogue, and a fourth who, being the most handsome, was to act the part of lover. They gripped canes that held thin sword-blades, they had daggers, and pistols ready primed. Hunt remained with the horses, and the other four entered the Tower. The "lover" was to stand guard at the door on pretence of waiting for his mistress, while with Blood the other two called on Edwards, telling him that they wished to inspect the regalia. Meanwhile the excited young gentlewoman, fumbling upstairs with her new gown, was too bashful to appear; she sent her maid to spy on the gentlemen and, particularly, upon her future bridegroom. The maid, seeing the youth guarding the door, returned with praises enough to soothe the fears of the wench, but to make more feverish her young heart.

Edwards produced the jewels and instantly a cloak was whipped over his head and a gag stuffed into his mouth; they told him then that they were taking the regalia with them, but that they would not hurt him if he did not stir, otherwise they would kill him. Edwards' answer was to gurggle against

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

the gag and to kick out, whereupon they clubbed him into silence and, as he remained defiant enough to give a wriggle or two, they drove a knife into his belly. Parrot took the orb, Blood the crown, and the third rogue started to file the sceptre in half so that he could put it in a bag. Then, suddenly, at the Tower door appeared Edwards' son; the "lover" asked who he was, and on being told, raced upstairs to warn his comrades. They could not wait to file the sceptre, but taking crown and orb, they fled.

Old Edwards by some miracle was not killed. He struggled up, somehow spat out the gag, and yelled, "Treason! Murder!" His daughter, awaiting a prettier summons, ran down and called to her brother and her brother-in-law Captain Beckman—one of the witnesses for the betrothal—who raced after Blood and his comrades. A warder tried to stop the rogues; Blood fired at him but missed. Another warder hid and let them pass. Running to their horses, the thieves yelled lustily, "Stop the rogues," but Beckman was close behind. Blood fired at him, but again he missed and was thrown down. Prone and struggling on the ground, captured though he was, he would not surrender his booty, and at last when it was wrenched from him, he calmly remarked, "It was a gallant attempt, however unsuccessful: it was for a crown!"

Parrot, too, was captured; the others rode off, but only two escaped. Hunt was soon taken.

The exploit was cunning and bravely, if brutally, executed, but the great mystery of the trial remains. The King himself judged Blood,

## HISTORY OF THE REGALIA

and the prisoner behaved in a most arrogant fashion, boasting of his crimes, of how he had tried to murder Ormonde, and of how once he had even tried to kill the King himself. Yet Charles not only pardoned Blood, he showered favours upon him. The mystery remains. Some have insinuated that Charles instigated the robbery, others that he feared reprisals from Blood's gang; but it seems most likely that Blood possessed state secrets that Charles feared might be exposed. "How he came to be pardoned," writes Evelyn after meeting Blood at court, "and even received into favour, not only after this but several other exploits almost as daring, both in Ireland and here, I never could come to understand. This man had not only a daring, but a villainous unmerciful look, a false countenance, but very well-spoken, and dangerously insinuating." Yet remain he did at court, feared by all and hated by many, until he died peacefully in his bed on August 29, 1680, impenitent and brave to the last.

BLOOD's effort had one good result; it drew attention to the insecurity of the regalia, and it was decided to build a special Jewel House, but this turned out to be no safer than the Martin Tower, for in 1843 when the nearby Armoury caught alight, it nearly brought the regalia to destruction. It was rescued by a courageous sergeant who rushed in and with the help of yeomen threw the jewels clear of danger. They were then taken to their present home, the Wakefield Tower, where they have since remained in safety except for

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

bombs spat down by Germans during the last war. After being nearly hit, they were transported for a time to Windsor Castle.

The present thick glass case in which the jewels repose was made by order of Edward VII after St. Patrick's Jewels had been stolen in Dublin. He was determined that no such thing should happen to the Crown Jewels of England, and whatever might be the mysterious devices that guard those twinkling gems and brilliant gold, we may take the word of Sir George Younghusband that "the inexperienced or indeed expert thief may certainly count on being guillotined or electrocuted if he makes the attempt to emulate Colonel Blood's adventure."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewel House*, by Major-General Sir George Younghusband (Jenkins), 1921.

PART TWO

*THE CORONATIONS OF  
PAST KINGS AND QUEENS  
OF ENGLAND*





# I

## *William the First*

1066

HE had conquered at Senlac, killing the brave Harold, yet he was not King. The country was unsubdued, and William waited at Hastings for five days after the battle, hoping for a deputation from London. The deputation did not arrive, so he decided that if England would not acclaim him King, he would force the country to accept him. Systematically he set about the task, rewarding those cities that opened their gates to his army, wrecking vengeance on those that stayed defiant. His claim on England was most flimsy; by right of birth it was almost non-existent; but neither had the claim of his predecessor, Harold II, been strong on this point. As a matter of fact, both men took the crown of England roughly by the same right, by the alleged promise of St. Edward the Confessor, the last King of the old line. But while Harold's accession had been by the will of the people, voted by the Witan, William backed up his demand by force and by the religious claim that the country had been given him by the Pope to subdue it to the Church of Rome. He edged around London, cutting it off from the rest of England.

Edgar, whose claim to England was the rightful one, surrendered his kingship; he headed a deputa-

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

tion to William, offering him the crown and swearing homage. William, usually so certain in his demands, now wavered a little; he wished his beloved duchess to be crowned beside him. She was in Normandy and it would be days, perhaps weeks, before she could arrive in England, and his captains urged on William that should he continue the war without becoming King he would remain purely an invader, but once crowned all those who withstood him would be damned as rebels. William gave in to their urging; on December 25, he was crowned at Westminster, the second of our Kings to be enthroned in the Abbey built by St. Edward, Harold, of course, being the first.

IN appearance the Conqueror was of medium height, clean-shaven, and slightly bald in the front. He was fair-skinned and plump, in late years he was to grow outrageously fat and to die because of it; at the date of his crowning he was forty years of age, a brave soldier, a cunning politician, and a man of almost incredible strength. He had a bow that few could handle, so tightly strung it was, so firm the wood. A chronicler records that he could aim this bow with his feet, though his method of doing this is not explained; perhaps he used it somewhat in the manner of a crossbow, putting the shaft between his toes and straightening his legs. His married life was an extremely happy one, except that his sons rebelled in later years against his harsh, just rule; but the only record we have of a serious quarrel with his Queen Matilda was caused by her helping one of these sons when

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THE INTHRONISATION OF KING HAROLD III  
From the Bayeux Tapestry



## WILLIAM I

William had declared the lad an enemy. He was in fact so chaste that men suspected he was not normal before his marriage, but evidently he was one of those cold, determined men in whom all desires are subordinated to the lust for power. History shows us many examples of this type: there is one in Europe to-day.

WILLIAM was not crowned by Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury. There is a legend that Stigand was so strong a patriot that he refused to consecrate a usurper. The truth is that William had arrived in England with a banner blessed by the Pope, he was the leader of a crusade to reform the English Church, and therefore to accept Stigand would have been to throw aside the power this gave him, for Stigand was not accepted by Rome. William, however, was too cunning a man to irritate the conquered nation without cause; he held the balance, as was his custom. Stigand participated in the ceremony but he did not officiate; that honour was given to Eldred, Archbishop of York, who had also crowned Harold.

The Abbey was guarded by Norman horsemen on Christmas Day, 1066, when the royal procession entered the great doors. First came the clergy holding up crosses, then the bishops followed by William himself. Stigand and Eldred walked beside him; around him strode the great men of Normandy and of England: conquered and conquerors mingled together, gay Norman and more stolid Anglo-Saxon. Within the Abbey, men of both nations waited, and they shouted as William strode into

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

the august candle-lit gloom. Norman and English, the voices merged in the acclamation; and the sincerity of the English need not be doubted very gravely. They had seen foreign Kings upon their throne before, once the Danes had ruled; and the reputation of William for strength and justice probably gave them the hope that at last there might be peace in their land that had suffered so many wars. They would not have appeared so different, the men of these two nations standing together in the Abbey; the conception of the small squat Norman, dark and brutal, against the tall, serious, and noble golden-headed Anglo-Saxon should be dismissed. Both races were fair-skinned, and under Edward the Confessor the Norman culture had seeped thoroughly into England; the costumes would be very alike, and the minds and appearances of both people were not greatly dissimilar.

A new crown had been made for William. One would think that he would deliberately have preferred the ancient crown, but it may have been stolen, or perhaps it was considered polluted by having rested on the head of Harold who, William considered, was a usurper, liar, blasphemer, and excommunicate.

The ceremony differed from Harold's only in one particular; for the first time, when the people were asked if they would accept their King, the question was put in two languages. Eldred spoke first in English, then Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, asked the same in Norman-French. "Yea, yea, King William!" came the answer. The shout

must have been something terrific; evidently the Anglo-Saxons were determined to prove their loyalty, and the Normans were determined to show they had the louder voices. At any rate, the thunder was sufficient to drive those Normans outside the walls into a panic. They believed that their duke was being murdered, and without attempting to rescue him, started immediate retribution on the English. They set alight to all the houses in the neighbourhood.

The flames glittered through the horn and glass windows of the Abbey, flashing colour upon the painted and white washed walls, splashing them as if with blood. William did not move. English and Norman both ran from the church, some to rescue their goods, some to join the riot. There was plunder to be had, and what Norman, conceived in the womb of piracy, could resist that lure?

Yet William did not move. Alone, amongst the officiating clergy, he sat upon the ancient throne of England, while Archbishop Eldred dribbled the holy oil upon his head, and rod and sceptre were put into his hands, and the new gem-brilliant crown was placed upon his thinning locks.



## II

### *William the Second*

1087

OF William's coronation all we know is that it followed the old formula. He was then between twenty-seven and twenty-nine years of age, and had proved himself a loyal son and courageous fighter. The great Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, officiated, and the ceremony was performed in the Abbey on Sunday, September 26. On his father's death, William had immediately raced to England. His first thought, naturally enough in that impious period, was for the royal treasure at Winchester. Finding this safe, he sped to Lanfranc at Canterbury, and showed him a letter dictated by his father on his death-bed, willing to him the throne, as his elder brother Robert had been disinherited for rebellion. The claim was accepted at once.

William has been heavily censured by history, and it is true that he was homosexual, a blasphemer, and a tyrant; but against his tyrannies must be set many good points—his sexual and religious feelings have nothing to do with him as King—he was a brave soldier, very loyal to his father, and he was exceptionally chivalrous.

In figure, he was rather squat and pot-bellied. He had a quick and speckled eye, his hair was

## WILLIAM II

yellowy-red, and his face was so fiery that it earned him the famous nickname of Rufus. But nicknames were common in the Middle Ages; William I was known as the Bastard, Henry I as the Clerk, Robert the disinherited as Curthose, Henry II as Curtmantle, and so on. It was the only distinguishing mark before the days of surnames. The famous surname of Plantagenet was based on the custom of the father of Henry II, Geoffrey, of wearing a sprig of bloom—genet—in his cap. It was revived as a surname by the Duke of York, father of Edward IV, in the fifteenth century.

The habit of calling men after their birthplaces came later: Thomas of Woodstock, John of Gaunt, Richard of Bordeaux, Henry of Bolingbroke, and others. Thomas Becket, for example—the “à” remains a mystery, it was unknown to contemporaries—was always called Thomas of London or Thomas of Canterbury.

### III

#### *Henry the First*

1100

WITHIN four days of his brother's death, Henry was crowned at Westminster on August 5 by Maurice, Bishop of London. The main interest of this coronation is Henry's charter that was issued very soon afterwards; this charter, "the parent of all later charters," served as model for Stephen Langton and the barons when they forced the wretched John to seal the famous Magna Carta on the meadow of Runnymede beside the Thames.

Henry was very acceptable to the English, for he was the only son of the Conqueror born in this country, and it is said that he could actually read the ancient tongue. But Henry was so cultured a man that he astounded his contemporaries by being able to read, without help, a letter sent him by the King of France. He was also nicknamed the Lion of Justice, and if his justice was strict, it was certainly impartial. A shrewd and rather selfish man, he was a great King and an omnivorous lover of women. His mistresses were apparently so numerous that they could scarcely be counted, and they included wenches of all nations.

Like his father and brother, he was not a big

## *HENRY I*

man and, like them, he was thick-set and plumpish. He had kind eyes and a black fringe that almost reached the brows. When crowned, he was not yet thirty-two; he was abstemious and slept like lead, except that he snored.

## IV

### *Stephen*

1135

STEPHEN was actually a usurper. Henry I, when his son William went down with his drunken comrades in the *White Ship*, decreed that his daughter Matilda should succeed him to the throne of England. He made the clergy and barons swear an oath of allegiance to her as their future Lady. Stephen took the oath gladly, but that did not stop him on Henry's death from racing straight to England. He was of direct descent from William I, his mother being William's daughter Adela, while his wife was the granddaughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and Queen Margaret who was a descendant of the old Anglo-Saxon Kings. England did not want the rule of a woman, and although it can scarcely be said that it welcomed Stephen, it accepted him.

He was crowned at Westminster on Thursday, December 26, by William of Corbeil, Archbishop of Canterbury, although William at first did not wish to perform the ceremony. Stephen's brother Henry, however, was the Bishop of Winchester and he, with the aid of Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, overcame William's scruples.

## *S T E P H E N*

Stephen was morally a weak man with enormous physical strength. Apparently he was also exceptionally handsome. Beyond that, we know practically nothing of his appearance or manners, except that he had a weak voice.

## V

*Henry the Second*

1154

FOR six weeks after the death of Stephen, England had no King. At least, it had no King in the country, for Henry FitzEmpress, son of Matilda and Geoffrey Plantagenet, was besieging a rebellious castle in Normandy. Stephen had promised Henry the throne, and now his friends urged him to hurry to England lest the barons revolt. It was typical of Henry that he answered contemptuously that they wouldn't dare, and calmly continued with the task of pounding the castle into dust. He knew his own strength and abilities and feared neither man nor God, except when ill. As St. Bernard once said of him, "From the devil he came and to the devil he will go"—a reference to the legend, of which Richard I, Henry's son, boasted during the Crusades, that the Plantagenets had a demon-ancestress. And their behaviour did not belie the boast.

On December 19, at Winchester, Henry was "crowned and consecrated with becoming pomp and splendour, amidst universal rejoicings, which many mingled with tears," and the excited chronicler bursts into rhapsodic verse, prose being of no further use to commemorate so glorious an event. After that, he ends his work by stating that

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"the accession of a new King demands a new Book." Either the writer, Henry of Huntington, then an old man, died, or he decided that under so wise a King, England was safe and that there was nothing further worth writing about. His pen had already recorded so many torments under the reign of Stephen that it must have been with gratitude and thanks to God that he threw it aside. Abruptly, his chronicle ends.

Henry II was indeed a great man. A demon of activity, seeming to prove that there must have been some truth in the old legend, he was a scholar, a soldier, and a statesman. When not working or fighting, he read or discussed recondite subjects with wise men. His retinue almost rebelled under his hard rule, for his own energy was so tireless that he was unable to realise that others might suffer fatigue. With sores on his legs from riding, with hands still wet with blood from the hunt, he would sit down to eat, gulping his food hurriedly as a waste of time when the world offered so many great and adventurous deeds for the performing, promised so much wisdom worth the learning. Slovenly dressed, limping with his ingrowing toenail, he roved about England and Normandy, demanding from others that which his own terrific vitality made easy until his followers faltered behind him.

He was only twenty-one when he became King of England. He was stocky, of medium height, with prominent grey eyes that could, we are told, be as tender as a dove's when he was in a friendly mood, or when one of his gigantic rages pricked



## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

him on, could glitter malevolently like fire. His red hair he cropped close in terror of baldness—probably the only thing that ever frightened him, except God, when he was ill—his voice was high-pitched, harsh, crackling from key to key. Bull-necked, broad-shouldered, his arms drooped like an ape's, and it is said that there was something "lion-like" in his round, fair, freckled face. So uncontrollable were his tempers that he fled lest he tear out men's eyes when they angered him; he ravished his son's betrothed and—like Henry I—broke a sacred knightly trust by seducing a hostage. It was said that "he was more tender to dead soldiers than to the living," and that he knew "almost all histories" that existed. Ever it seemed he had weapons of war in his hands, or if not weapons of war then books. And apparently he could draw, for we are told that he sketched during Mass, grudging even that time to God.

A great man and a great King: England had need of such after the anarchy of Stephen's rule—or rather, his lack of rule.

## VI

### *Richard I*

1189

By treachery, Richard had driven his father to his death. Coldly he gazed upon the old man's corpse which, chroniclers tell us, exuded blood at his entrance, then he sailed for England. Over six-feet tall and well-built, Richard had a reddish face and golden hair and beard; broad-shouldered, long-shanked, his head was small, with thin underlip, the nose firm and straight. With his brother John, Richard, after seeing his father's body at Fontevrault, sailed for England on August 12, 1189. First, as was usual, he rushed to Winchester to seize whatever treasure was left, then on September 3, his coronation took place.

It was a splendid coronation. On a chair, probably on a raised platform, Richard faced the throne of England. He was disrobed, and stood in shirt and breeches, a magnificent figure with his golden head and long limbs, while he was anointed. Slits had been made in the shirt for the purpose, and through these slits the Archbishop consecrated him with holy oil, touching him on either shoulder. The chrism was dripped upon his head, which was then swathed in a coif and had to remain bound for eight days so that not a drop of that

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

precious mixture of holy oil and balsom—used only for baptism, confirmation, and ordination—might be lost. Tunic and dalmatic were next drawn over his broad shoulders, the cap of maintenance was tugged over the chrismale that bound his head, and gold-laced sandals were slipped upon his feet. Next came the spurs, the sword, the stole and mantle; after which he was led to the altar; there he gave his oath to keep the laws, and then received the crown. He passed it to the Archbishop, who placed it above the cap of maintenance. Now was Richard of Normandy King of England. The ring was put upon his finger; the sceptre and rod were given to him, while the *Te Deum* was sung, and he sat upon the throne.

Everything apparently was going excellently, but that was only inside the Abbey. Outside, there was murder. The laws against Jews in the Middle Ages, that period of often blind faith, were very strict; they were tolerated as useful creatures from whom Kings could milk money, for it was anti-Christian to deal in usury. Therefore all money-lending fell to the Jews; they were hated but feared, and lived under royal patronage only. We must not consider the medieval Jew as a whining Isaac such as Scott portrayed; when he kept the King's favour he was powerful and arrogant. On this occasion of Richard's crowning, some were arrogant—or perhaps foolish—enough to try to enter the Abbey with gifts—sacrilege for an unbeliever to pollute a Christian church, and besides, Richard had strictly forbidden their coming. The poor wretches were murdered on the spot, and with

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## RICHARD I

gusto the murderers sought further wealthy London turned out for a joyous pogrom murder, rape, and robbery. The citizens, he the "liking [pleasing] tidings" in the city, with staves to destroy the Jews. And the praving and crying, brake up the house where Jews were y-flown for dread, and burned spoiled and took what they might, and would leave for the King's sending." Richard did his but long-stored resentment against usury was powerful to dam once it had burst the bounds day after the coronation "the King sent his vants and took those evil-doers who burned city—not for the Jews' sake, but for the sake the houses and goods of Christians which they burned and despoiled also—and some of them hanged." All over England spread these "tidings," the war-cry of the pogrom, the unpressible hatred of the Jew—the world's scapegoat then as he is to-day. In every city in England except Winchester, the Jews were slaughtered. In York there was the most horrible massacre. Four hundred of them hid in one of the towers until, escape being hopeless, "after a siege and great mischief and woe, Rabbi, one of Jews, for-cut the veins of four hundred and his own veins also, and his wife's too. Also at Stamford, Jews were y-beaten, y-slain, y-spoiled."

For months the pogrom went on, until Richard managed to stem it and demand compensation from the various towns. And all because of the coronation, which should have been so joyous.

## *CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

festival, a Jew "was y-smitten with a man's fist" as he strove foolishly to enter the Abbey.

RICHARD was crowned a second time, on the first Sunday after Easter, April 17, 1194, following his return from captivity. It has been suggested that this unusual second coronation was because, during his absence, his brother John had attempted to usurp his throne, but the true reason was obviously caused by Richard's having been forced to give homage to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to escape from imprisonment. To efface this shame, and to be reborn as King, Richard was again anointed—this time at Winchester.

## VII

*John*

1199

OF John's coronation we know almost nothing, except that a bishop protested because, said he, they should have waited for the Archbishop of York to be present; and that John did not communicate afterwards. Only one other King of England failed to communicate at his crowning, and that was James II; both suffered, and perhaps the superstitious can scarcely be blamed for tracing omens in such accidents.

The ceremony took place at Westminster on May 27.

John was a smallish, plump man, strongly built, with thick curly hair that soon thinned until, towards the end of his life, he was practically bald. But after suffering so tormented a reign, that can well be understood; he also later grew very fat. His skeleton was measured in 1797, and gave a height of five feet six inches.

The Angevin demoness was strong in John's blood. Like father, Henry II, and brother, Richard I, his rages were terrible to watch. He would roll upon the ground biting at legs of chairs and chewing up pieces of straw. He was lecherous and gluttonous and lazy; always daintily dressed, a dandy, he loved rich wines and sweet music.

## *CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

Yet when occasion served, he was a splendid and brave soldier; the weakness in his character were provoked by the nickname bestowed on him by his own father—that of Lackland. A youngest son, every one of his ambitions was frustrated. He seemed from birth doomed to a miserable penniless existence; then by extraordinary chance, gangrene in the shoulder of Richard, the throne of England fell to him. He had schemed to attain that ambition, and now that it was attained, it seemed valueless; better than all the power in the world, he felt, was to lie slugabed with his small twelve-year-old wife, Isabel, whom he had stolen from her betrothed.

## VIII

### *Henry III*

1216

THE barons had called in the aid of France against their King, John, and the French King had sent his son Louis to take the crown. The south of England was in the hands of the French, therefore when John died in agony at Swineshead Abbey after the Wash had sucked in his baggage and his troops, it was too dangerous for the nobles to carry his son for hallowing at Westminster. It is said that the crown of England disappeared with John's other baggage in the quicksands: that may be true, but it is equally possible that the crown was safe at Winchester or Westminster; at any rate, Henry was made King on Friday, October 28, with "a sort of chaplet" in the Abbey church at Gloucester.

Standing before the high altar with the Bishop of Bath, the nine-year-old King piped out the oath "that he would give honour, peace, and reverence to God and His Holy Church and its ministers all the days of his life. Also he swore that he would show strict justice to the people committed to him, that he would destroy evil laws and unjust customs, if there were any in his realm, and would observe the good and make everyone else observe them. Then he did homage to the most holy Roman Church and to Pope Innocent for the



## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

kingdoms of England and Ireland; and he swore that so long as he held his kingdom, he would faithfully pay the thousand marks which his father had bestowed upon the Roman Church. When this had been done, Peter, Bishop of Winchester, and Jocelin, Bishop of Bath, anointed him as King, and solemnly crowned him with canticles and chants which are wont to be sung at the coronation of Kings."

It will be noticed that loyalty to the Church comes before loyalty to the people—a lesson always thoroughly remembered by Henry, and which created a mighty rebellion led by Simon de Montfort. The "bestowal" of money on the Church was, of course, John's ransom of England. When the barons had John cornered, he swiftly outmanœuvred them by giving England to the Pope and then buying it back again at a fixed yearly sum. That ransom was to be the cause of continual bickerings for centuries until Edward III's parliament put a stop to it.

Little Henry III was to grow up into a weak, vacillating, miserable creature who looked upon England purely as a source of revenue for himself and his guardian the Pope. Of his personal appearance we know little except that his left eyelid drooped so far that it almost concealed the pupil, and that he was of medium height, and fattish.

At Westminster, on Sunday, May 17, 1220, he was again anointed with full ceremonial by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.



*By courtesy of the British Museum*

THE CORONATION OF KING HENRY III



## IX

### *Edward the First*

1274

WHEN his father died, Edward was far away, homeward bound from his futile crusade in the Holy Land. He was then in Italy and Sicily, and the news of Henry's end followed swiftly on tidings that his own son had died; Edward's host was amazed to see that his guest's sorrow was deeper at the loss of his father than at that of his son. Edward answered that he could get more sons but never a second father, and with all his faults—and they were many—Henry III had been a tender and loving parent. He died on November 16, 1272, and it was not until August 2, 1274, that Edward landed in England to be crowned at Westminster on the 19th.

His Queen was crowned with him, and this is the first occasion on which King and consort were crowned together in Westminster Abbey, Henry II's and Eleanor's coronation being at Worcester—and we are not really certain if Eleanor was present, although she probably was. It was a splendid gathering that rode through London on that day. Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, officiated. All the great men of England were present, with the King's two brothers-in-law, Alexander, King of Scotland, and

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

John, Duke of Bretagne. On the following day, Alexander paid homage, yet towards Scotland Edward's reign was one of the most brutal that that country had ever known.

We have records of the coronation feast: 380 head of cattle were slaughtered, while 430 sheep, 450 pigs, 18 wild boars, 20,000 capons or fowls, and 278 flitches of bacon were eaten. So reckless was the King's largess that, although special buildings had been erected, the crowd overswelled the area, and the feasting had to be prolonged for days to give each a bellyful. In London, glowing tapestries swayed against the walls of houses, banners flew from windows, women showered down kisses and the wealthy men gold coins, while wine gushed from the conduits. The gifts did not come only from the citizens, for we learn that "when the King was seated on his throne, King Alexander of Scotland came to do him worship, and with him an hundred knights, mounted and accoutred: and when they had alighted off their horses, they let the horses run wherever they willed, and those who could catch them might keep them. And after these came Sir Edmund, the King's brother; and with him the Earl of Gloucester; and after them came the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl Warenne; and each of these led an hundred knights, they also, when they had dismounted, let their horses loose, and those able to take them kept them to their liking."

That must have been a splendid day in the grounds of Westminster, with the superb horses, vivid in their painted trappings, high wooden

## EDWARD I

saddles on their backs jerking against the girths, and the thick reins slapping free; horses kicking, prancing, as the mob surged on them. Many a broken skull and limb there must have been, with blood flecking the horses' coats and sinking into the ground: largess indeed in kingly style, for horses were a more than valuable commodity in the Middle Ages.

EDWARD has been hailed as probably the greatest of all our Kings; but our admiration for him must be tempered by the realisation that he left a bankrupt country facing an apparently endless war with Scotland. He was a just, cruel man revolving on his own enormous belief in himself that blinded him to the feelings or ambitions of other men. It was this that made him great, as it made Henry V great—the arrogant belief that he was almost divine, an emissary from God sent to bring justice and peace to earth. If Wales and Scotland rebelled because he swept aside their ancient laws and instituted his own, he was genuinely puzzled because to him his laws were the better, the others seemed barbarous. These laws that have earned him the title of the English Justinian were, in fact, little more than a codification of old English laws, he fixed them and brought them up to date. This in itself was a very great achievement, but the really great achievement of his reign was the fruit of another man's dreams. Parliament may have appeared under Edward I, but it had been born in the wars of the great Simon de Montfort, whom Edward himself had killed.

## *CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

Edward looked the perfect King when at the age of thirty-three he was crowned at Westminster. Nicknamed Longshanks, he was extremely tall and held himself straight. Oval-faced, broad-chested, wide-browed, and strong-nosed, the only blemish to his countenance was the drooping eyelid inherited from his father. His hair and beard were of golden curls, and his strong teeth were whole until he died, which must have been almost a miracle in the Middle Ages, that era of sweet, soppy foods. He stuttered very badly except when his subject gripped him; then such was his eloquence that men would die beneath his banner or weep for pity at his woes.

When all is said of Edward, even if he were not so great as one readily assumes, he had the swift intelligence to choose brilliant ministers and to seize as his own and to act upon the cunning ideas of others.

After all, there is little else we can demand from any King.

## X

### *Edward the Second*

1308

WHEN, on February 25, Edward was to be crowned with his newly married Queen, Isabel of France, there was an unexpected hitch in the proceedings. That morning the barons and prelates met, and in the manner of righteous men argued solemnly together about the King's behaviour. Edward, like most sons, was not from his father's mould; he was of a different make and cared little for the war with Scotland that had so obsessed the old, dead man that as a dying command he laid its continuance upon his son. Young Edward was definitely homosexual, but so had been Richard I and William II, and their morals had only outraged a few churchmen like the sainted Anselm when he cursed the girlish followers of Rufus. But Edward II was not a soldier—although brave enough—while both the others had been fierce fighting-men who gloried in bloodshed. Edward preferred low-caste games and company to solemn council-chambers where methods of extortion could be discussed or to battlefields on which they could be put into violent practice. He liked drinking, singing, and acting; he liked to hammer at metal-work, and even, when the peculiar fit took him, to dig ditches and thatch houses or to booze with sailors. The nobles might have stood



## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

all this, but they could not tolerate the King's favourite companion, young Peter—or Piers—Gaveston. Gaveston came of good family although not of the noblest; he was flamboyant, most cruelly witty—unforgivable sin to dull-minded warriors who argued only with axes and swords; he bewildered the nobles by not using his position of favourite as a means for graft, and he drove them to madness by actually daring to defeat them at a tournament. On Edward's accession, he had been banished from the realm, and one of Edward's first royal acts was to recall his friend. It was for this reason that the prelates and lords met on the morning of his coronation.

When the Queen came to England, she brought with her her two powerful uncles, Charles and Louis, and they hated Gaveston on sight for their niece's sake. Before them and the Queen, the council demanded of the King that he banish Gaveston; otherwise, they said, the coronation would not be carried through. All that Edward could answer, being taken at such a disadvantage, was to promise to obey the next parliament if they would let the coronation continue. To this the triumphant council agreed, and immediately the King appointed Gaveston to carry the crown—chief of the insignia—in the public procession.

The coronation was a pathetic failure, and the nobles were further outraged because Gaveston outshone them in his dazzling clothes of purple sewn with pearls; even the proud, luxurious Frenchmen seemed tawdry beside his splendour. Holding the crown of England on a velvet cushion,

Gaveston was a figure that none could ignore; insolently amongst the barons who hated him he strode towards the King who loved him. And not only the crown, the left spur was also given him to clip upon the King's heel.

Everything possible went wrong with the ceremony. The crowd was so huge that it pushed over a brick wall in the quire, crushing a knight to death. And the banquet was a disgraceful muddle. The kitchen was stuffed with enough food to satisfy a besieged garrison, but the servitors were either careless or grossly understaffed; half the gathering had nothing to eat.

So began one of the most tragic reigns in history, concluding with a murder so diabolic that most historians dare do little except to hint at its method. It is true that Edward deserved most of the tragedy that came upon him. He was weak in his love, and although a kind and trusting man, his favourites and a vindictive murderous wife dragged him to destruction.

He "was a man of fine person, of great physical strength, but of no settled character," and had just passed twenty-three when he succeeded to the throne. Tall, graceful, and handsome, the pathetic weak King dragged his own doom upon him; but it must not be forgotten that the legacy bequeathed him by his giant of a father was enough to destroy the will even of a stronger man than Edward II.

We must not judge Kings too harshly: their temptations are greater than ever we could understand: their task must often become intolerable.

## XI

### *Edward the Third*

1327

At the age of fifteen, Edward III was proclaimed King of England and was crowned on February 1, although his father still lived, a prisoner, soon to be foully murdered. Before the lad could be crowned, the father had to be deposed, and a deputation of bishops waited on the wretched Edward II at Kenilworth. He reviled them as traitors. He tore his clothes, and lay sobbing on the rush-strewn floor. They lifted him to his feet and held him up as the bishops continued; they pointed out that it was not a question of his ever being King again, it was a question of his son becoming King; either he abdicated, or his line would be blotted from England. To that, there was only one answer—abdication. By this act the father sealed his death-warrant, but he made his son his heir. Although young Edward was allegedly King, the true ruler of England was now his mother's lover, Roger Mortimer. Later, when he grew old enough to understand the truth, Edward III took his revenge: he killed Mortimer, slayer of his father.

"Then was crowned with a royal crown at the palace [abbey] of Westminster beside London the young King Edward the Third, who in his days after was right fortunate and happy in arms."

## EDWARD III

So says Froissart, giving little hint of the terrible tragedy there was behind the royal coat-of-arms that hung behind the chair of Edward, nor that the crown was soon to be dyed in the blood of the father. To prove to the populace that this was no usurpation, but a rightful inheritance, medals were struck and thrown into the crowd. On the obverse of these medals was an image of the young King, crowned, his sceptre resting on a cushion of hearts, with the inscription, *He gives laws to a willing people*; on the reverse was a hand taking a crown falling out of heaven, with the inscription, *He does not snatch it—he receives it*.

The sword and shield-of-state in the Abbey alleged to be Edward I's are said to have been for the first time carried before Edward III at this coronation.

AFTER revenging his father's murder, Edward set himself to become a perfect King, and he succeeded according to the medieval standard. Gaudily dressed, heroic in war, gallant at court, he typified the ideal medieval knight until he fell into his dotage and into the arms of rapacious fascinating Alice Perrers.

Although not so tall as father and grandfather, Edward was strongly made, with "the face of a god."

the street. At the east end of Chepe, the tall, carved conduit splashed wine for the three hours it took the procession to pass; the little conduit towards the west, opposite Foster Lane, also spat its wine, and there was a castle built around it, with four turrets and a breast-like dome in the centre. In each turret there stood a little girl of Richard's age, and as the King passed bare-headed, the little girls blew showers of gold leaf upon his long golden hair; and under his horses' hoofs they sprinkled imitation gold florins. Then when baskets were empty, they raced downstairs to present their King with wine from a golden goblet. Above them, out of the dome, fluttered a mechanical gilt angel on wires, holding a crown above the boy-king. With trumpets blaring, on went the procession, out of London, down the Strand to Charing, from Charing south to Westminster. The men of Bayeux rode first; behind came members of a city ward in all their bright livery; then a troop of armed German mercenaries; more members of another ward; then Gascons; more Londoners; then the great men of England. To symbolise the boy-king's innocence, all were dressed in white.

At Westminster, Richard drank a cup of wine, then proceeded to his chambers to sup and to undergo the ceremonial bath, for it was usual before religious ceremonies to wash thoroughly, as if by washing the dirt from one's body one also washed the sins from one's mind and entered on this new semi-divine state unsoiled. From this custom is derived the Order of the Knights

of the Bath, instituted in the next reign by Henry IV.

On the following day began the coronation—Richard. He wore his shirt and tunic, prepared with slits for the anointing. Over the tunic was placed the parliament robe. At the Abbey, Richard was met by the clergy; above his head was borne the canopy by the Barons of the Cinque Ports, and he walked barefoot over a long carpet of striped worsted towards the high altar, before which he knelt in prayer. A platform, or “theatre,” had been erected at the crossing of the transepts and the quire: on this would be Richard’s chair.

The usual question was put, the usual answer given by the people. Ay, they would have Richard for King! There was a sermon, in which the Bishop of Rochester was tactless enough to warn the boy against excessive taxation, followed by the oath. The Archbishop of Canterbury asked if Richard would keep the laws of the country, and particularly of St. Edward [which meant nothing except symbolically], if he would defend the Church, be just in his judgments, and if he would uphold those laws which the people would choose. Then a bishop asked if Richard would defend the privileges of bishops and abbots. On promising everything he was asked, Richard swore to keep those promises, first swearing on the altar and then on the sacraments.

Now came the consecration. Kneeling before the altar, Richard remained silent while prayers,

a litany, and the seven penitential psalms were said. Then, standing to his feet, behind a curtain of cloth-of-gold, he was anointed on six places, the silver links of his specially prepared shirt being opened for that purpose—on hands, breast, shoulders, back, elbows, and head he was touched by the holy oil. Then the chrismale was swathed about his head to keep the oil pure.

His sins washed from him, having sworn to rule wisely, and now having been consecrated, the outward insignia of royalty were given the boy: the alb, the tunic, buskins, spurs, sword, armilla, the imperial mantle, and lastly the crown of St. Edward. Next comes the thrice-blessed ring, then the sword was ungirt and offered by Richard to the altar. It was redeemed by an earl for a hundred shillings who carried it naked before the King from that moment until the end of the ceremony. Next came rod and sceptre, and the King kissed the bishops while, to the singing of the *Te Deum*, he was lifted on to the throne built by Edward VI—the same throne in which King George VI will sit in 1937. And here he received the homage of his barons.

This lightning survey can give no conception of the tedium of that ceremony, glorious though it must have looked with the nobles dressed in their fluttering coats, the heralds aflame in their shirts, and the soldiers' helmets gleaming dully, oily in the candlelight. So exhausted was young Richard at the conclusion that he could barely stand, and his tutor, Simon Burley, lifted him in his arms and

carried him to the palace. A consecrated slipper fell from his small foot to be lost for ever in the mob.

During the feasting afterwards, the diners and watchers were so many that the senechals on horseback had to stamp passages through which the servants could carry food. In the courtyard had been built a tall marble pillar bearing aloft a gilt eagle; from the four sides of this pillar spouted four different wines.

GREAT were the hopes at Richard's coronation. There had been oppression in England under the grafting rule of the nobles while King Edward III lolled on silken cushions and turned his glazed old lecherous eyes upon the white perfection of laughing Alice Perrers; now the boy-king seemed an augury of innocence and prosperity. But the boy-king was in the hands of powerful uncles, and soon the country rose in the great Peasants' Rebellion led by loud-voiced, courageous, sane John Ball and the maligned Wat Tyler. But even here the boy-king conquered; the commons were unable to believe that tyranny could speak with the tongue of innocence, and they were massacred for their simplicity.

Yet tyrannous, vindictive, futile as Richard's rule became, one can surely forgive him when one recalls his youth—a King without power, a nephew twisted this way and that by bullying, arrogant uncles who wished even to steal the throne if possible.

Richard grew into almost a beautiful man



## *RICHARD II*

and, like his grandfather, was extremely charming when he wished to be; he also had the most violent of tempers which often he could not control. Golden-headed, he was at first clean-shaven, but later grew a tuft of a beard; he also became rather plump.

the hallowing of the font. Then the King was apparelled like a prelate of the Church, with a cope of red silk and a pair of spurs with a point without a rowel [prick-spurs]: then the sword of justice was drawn out of the sheath and hallowed, and then it was taken to the King, who did put it again into the sheath; then the Archbishop of Canterbury did gird the sword about him. Then Saint Edward's crown was brought forth which is close above [unlike the earlier crowns open at the top, but with arches, in the modern form], and blessed, and then the Archbishop did set it on the King's head. After Mass the King departed out of the church in the same estate and went to his palace; and there was a fountain that ran by divers branches white wine and red. . . .”

One or two minor points are overlooked by Froissart. This was the first occasion in which the Virgin Mary's holy oil was used, the history of which is described in an earlier chapter; also a Welshman, Adam of Usk, tells us that when the oil was poured on Henry's head, lice rushed out, which undoubtedly produced many an uneasy thought in the spectators who remembered that Richard II was not far away kicking with empty fury against stone walls.

The tale of the Champion at the banquet has already been told, but Froissart does not give it. He describes only how “in the midst of the dinner there came in a knight who was called Dymock, all armed upon a good horse richly apparelled, and had a knight before him bearing his spear and his sword by his side, and his dagger. The



Mandefre

fere la plus grant pance et

# THE CORONATION OF KING HENRY IV

This miniature is from Froissart's *Chronicles* and the illustrations were executed many years after the writing of the manuscript. This might more

justly represent the period of Henry VI.

By courtesy of the British Museum.



knight took the King a libel [a leaflet], the which was read. Therein was contained, that if there were other knight, squire, or any other gentleman, that would say that King Henry was not rightful King, he was there ready to fight with him in that quarrel before the King, or whereas it should please him to appoint. That bill was cried by an herald in six places of the hall and in the town. There was none that would challenge him."

HENRY had seized the throne, but it gave him no happiness. He died with face and body so frightful that few could look upon him, the result of ergotism, caused by eating rye bread—a common enough disease in the Middle Ages; a great deal of the so-called leprosy was ergotism,<sup>1</sup> but leprosy was then the label for any skin disease, from eczema to the most serious affections.

In his youth, Henry IV wandered over Europe and the Near East, fighting for almost any one who could promise a good brawl; he remained a good soldier after he was crowned, as is proved by the superb battle of Shrewsbury in which he defeated the great Hotspur.

Henry is a somewhat pathetic figure in history, although those who treasure liberty must feel within them a certain repugnance at the mention of his name, for, under the influence of Archbishop Arundel, he introduced into England the ghastly "burning death" for heretics.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Antiquaries Journal*, July 1934, for Dr. Philip Nelson's convincing argument on this question. Until then it had been believed that Henry died either of actual leprosy or syphilis, and it is doubtful if syphilis existed in Europe at this early date.

*CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*

He was a serious, fair-minded, painstaking King, a lover of music, and a good husband. In youth, before disease riddled face and body, he was apparently quite handsome, powerfully built, and of medium height. He had a reddish beard, forked, as can be seen carved on the effigy on his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral.

It was "a sore rugie and tempestuous day" when Henry V was crowned. There was a blizzard in England, which spread to France where, although in the south the heat was so intense that grapes were gathered a month earlier than usual, in Paris so fierce was the cold that doors were bolted against it and men and women sickened themselves in stuffy rooms, breathing vile charcoal from the brazier. Parliament could only sit from six to nine in the morning; even the voices of lawyers in court became frozen, and they could only gurgie and not speak. Through the blinding snow, with singing eyeballs and freezing lips, King Henry V, on Passion Sunday, April 9, rode from the Tower to Westminster. A day of ill-omen on which to begin a reign, the second from the usurpation. But Henry did not blink against the wet. Silently, sternly, he rode through London. In the country, men, beasts, and houses vanished under the great white pall of death, and there was much whispering that this crowning was to usher in God knew what doom for England, as the rightful claimant of the throne, the Earl of March, heir of Richard II, was in that gathering.

Henry V was twenty-five years old at his

1413

*Henry the Fifth*

XIV

accession; he had spent the night after his father's death with the holy hermit of Westminster Abbey, for there were many sins that he felt needed shaming. From early youth he had been a soldier. His father's throne was insecure, and many were the great lords who had grudged serving a King who sprang from no higher rank than themselves; they had risen under Hotspur and had tried to join with the Welsh under Owen Glendower. The Welsh failed to meet the insurgents, and the two Henrys, father and son, fought a splendid battle at Shrewsbury, and conquered. There were so few men whom Henry IV could trust in this disgruntled land. The boy, his son, had to bear a man's work on the marches of Wales, and magnificently he fought until he defeated the armies of Glendower. It was inevitable that the reaction from this harsh warring life should fling young Henry into the arms of women, should make his throat, parched with battle-shouting, itch for a stoup of wine. The sins of Henry's youth, if sins they can be called, have been immortalised and vastly exaggerated by Shakespeare, but they were sufficient to make him when King ashamed of his past and eager to prove himself a good, just man. Quickly the reaction sent him to the church until, shortly after his crowning, he was dubbed the Priests' Prince, and the Lollards—those early Protestants—grew so fearful of their independence that they attempted to rebel, only to be swiftly crushed.

Through the snow rode Henry to the Abbey.



Between the high altar and the quire had been raised the customary scaffold, the theatre, and it was draped with cloth-of-gold. Silently, humbly, Henry underwent the ancient ceremony, and afterwards came the feasting in the great hall. We still possess the menu of that banquet, and the very thought of such retchy, sickly food-stuffs would turn the stomach of a modern man. On the marble chair on a dais, Henry sat under the cloth-of-estate, and one who saw him there tells us that he appeared to be almost an angel. He did not eat, men said; he remained like a holy man determined to taste nothing; and for three days afterwards he did not eat, preparing himself for the task that he considered semi-divine, for he was a humourless man with a great sense of his own majesty.

A Frenchman at the coronation gleefully noted that Henry was not acceptable to all his people, that there were sly glances towards the Earl of March; this Frenchman believed that England would very soon be split into civil war like France which was then battling within itself. And it is true that not long afterwards a plot was started against the throne; efficiently, quickly, Henry dealt with the plotters, and never again did any man in England dare to speak against him, not even the Earl of March himself.

When Dymock rode into the hall to deliver his challenge, none answered him. Who would have had the courage to speak before that tall, young man upon his marble chair, seated like a God who did not need the foods of earth to nourish him?

*CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND*  
 HENRY brought great glory to England by his conquest of France, by the incredible victory of Agincourt; but he plunged the country into a war that dragged on and on, killing brave men, destroying trade, and sucking money out of England. Glory is ill-bought that might wreck a nation.  
 He was a handsome man with oval face, a broad forehead, straight nose, and fresh complexion, with white and regular teeth, thick brown hair—cut in the bowl-crop, shaved from the neck to above the ears, a soldier's hair-cut—cleft chin, full mouth, and bright hazel eyes that could be as tender as a dove's or as furious as a lion's. He was a superb athlete and a brave soldier; but his great qualities were marred by his fanaticism in the cause of the Church and in the fact that he plunged the country into a seemingly endless war. The tragedy is that he was also a great politician and could have been a great King, one of our very greatest.

1429

*Henry the Sixth*

XV

It was a tragic failure. Probably owing to the tender age of Henry, and his councillors wishing no brawls or indecency in London, the conduits did not as usual gush with wine. Instead, pious

minister ceremony was hurried through. Therefore, on Sunday, November 6, the West-King of England."

be crowned King of France he must be crowned best for Henry to visit Paris, but "before he could be done for the English cause, and it was thought And miraculously, Orleans fell. Something had to aloft her banner, she led the troops to Orleans. hausted French; in her shining armour, holding spiration and had whipped courage into the ex-Maid, had arrived with her seemingly divine in-heart to the men. That great creature, Joan the in Paris it might rally the dispirited and give new that if little Henry were crowned King of France turn against the English, and it was thought that still aimlessly continued was beginning to viii year old," but his father's war with France than had been intended. Henry was "not fully and even then the coronation was really earlier in 1422, Henry VI was not crowned until 1429, Although he became King on his father's death

inscriptions were placed around them as if at a modern prohibitionist meeting; and temperance advocates in the Middle Ages would have been greeted not even with laughter: they would very sensibly have been locked into bedlam as folk too lunatic to remain at large. The people at Henry's coronation were given merely one miserable cup of wine each, and even that had to be asked for politely. In the huge mob some were crushed to death; the inevitable cutpurses were caught, and Smithfield showed a heretic hunched up, twisting in the flames above the tarred faggots. The little King was too young to bear the full ceremony, and he was held in the arms of his tutor, the Earl of Warwick, that "father of chivalry;" the miraculous oil of the Virgin Mary's was again used, while Henry, dressed in furred scarlet, sat on the "theatre" between the high altar and the quire, gazing dully about him with a look that was misconstrued as wise. The crown was too large to rest upon his head, and he had to have "two bishops standing on every [each] side of him, helping him to bear the crown, for it was over-heavy for him, for he was of a tender age."

THE subsequent crowning in Paris on Sunday, December 16, 1431, was an even greater failure. Not a single French Prince appeared, and although Henry's grandmother, Queen Isabel, was in Paris at the time, she tactfully remained at home. Very stupidly, English, and not French, bishops officiated. Not a groat was given in largess, not a prisoner was freed, not a tax remitted. The meal

## HENRY VI

was confusion, and practically all the stuff was cold, while the Paris mob fought its way inside, and commoners jostled lords for a bite of food.

Poor Henry! His reign was a miserable one of short periods of happiness broken with gaps of madness, of exile or imprisonments until he died in the Tower of London—some with great probability saying that he was murdered at the command of his successor, Edward IV.

His mother had been Katherine of Valois, daughter of the mad King Charles VI of France, who sometimes thought that he was made of glass, and shrieked if anybody touched him lest he break. And little Henry had in him more of the insane blood of his grandfather than the fire of his dispassionate, heroic, fanatical father, Henry V. Henry VI was not a dangerous madman; he was merely simple, and would at times disappear inside his body so that a grinning, ogling, perambulating corpse wandered about the palace, inarticulate and deaf. Then slowly he would return and gaze wonderingly upon this world in which steel-clad men tramped and parliaments grumbled everlastingly of money. Kind and pious, Henry could not understand that money had any value except to give away.

It is more than probable that he would have died peacefully in his bed had he not married there Margaret of Anjou whose vindictiveness and lust for power drove England against her and the throne. The rightful heir, the descendant of the Earl of March, was Richard, Duke of York. He

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

quietly accepted insults and degradation until the spleen of Margaret became so dangerous that he had to take action after the commons had forced his hands. Jack Cade, one of freedom's real heroes, led the people of England in a superbly organised rebellion, but he failed, like so many rebels, because he could not fight the money-panic of the merchant-class when he entered London. He was killed. Then York took action and demanded his throne. He was never to get it, but his second son, Edward, the White Rose of Rouen, was eventually elected King by the people while Henry VI still lived in exile.

The rightful line, swept aside for three generations by the Lancastrian usurpation, had returned to England.

# XVI

## *Edward the Fourth*

1461

There is a certain confusion about the exact date of Edward's coronation, but it took place on Sunday, June 28. This confusion has been caused because on the following Monday, St. Peter's Day, Edward again went in state to the Abbey, and on Tuesday, the Commemoration of St. Paul, he visited St. Paul's Cathedral to be greeted by religious pagants and to be censured—sprinkled with holy water—by a mechanical angel. This second most unusual visit to the Abbey was the result of an old superstition. Childermas, or Innocents' Day, the commemoration of Herod's slaughter of the innocents, fell in 1460 upon a Sunday, and it was believed that the day of the week on which this mournful mass fell remained one of ill-omen for the rest of the year. Medieval men had as much terror of omens as had the ancient Romans and Greeks, and Edward wanted no whispers to circulate that would do him harm in the coming war against Margaret of Anjou and Henry VI. Therefore undoubtedly it was thought safest to have an extra rite on the ensuing Monday.

On the 26th, Edward rode from Lambeth to the Tower, attended by the mayor and alderman in scarlet and by four hundred of the commons

"well-horsed and clad in green." At the Tower including Edward's two young brothers, George and Richard.

The next day, the usual procession started from the Tower, the new knights riding ahead of the King "in blue gowns, and hoods upon their shoulders like to priests." At the Abbey, Archbishop Bouchier officiated, and the "rich crown of King Edward" the Confessor—who had, of course, never even seen it—was taken from its iron-bound box in the treasury and placed upon the golden head of Edward IV.

He was a superb-looking man this new King. All who saw him were amazed at his beauty and physique; even sly Comines, the French chronicler, is shaken out of his cynicism to exclaim that Edward was "the handsomest Prince my eyes ever beheld." Six feet three and a half inches tall, he was fair-skinned and had long flaxen hair to his shoulders. One of England's greatest warriors—he never refused a battle and was never defeated—he was lecherous and fondled any pretty wench who strayed near his hands. It has been said that he was a weak politician, but that is not true. He came to a country broken by civil war, and he brought that country to prosperity.

A Renaissance figure, a lover of art, science, and women, Edward was too tolerant to persecute, too noble to seek revenge, too good-humoured to take life seriously until, during his last years, the



Edward V was never crowned. Shortly before the date of his coronation, facts were placed before the council proving that he was illegitimate, that his father, Edward IV, had been already married when he wedded Elizabeth Woodville, mother of Edward V. The country had not long since recovered from a bloody civil war, and there were threats of further fighting; on his death-bed, Edward IV had appointed his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, his son's sole guardian, and the boy's mother and family started immediate intrigues to get the young King into their hands. Richard was almost captured, but he was warned in time, and by swift action arrested most of the conspirators, some of whom he executed; the Queen Mother fled to sanctuary. A hurriedly gathered council, terrified by contrary rumours, when it discovered the truth commended Richard for his quickness and gave to him an oath of fealty. With this rebellion quashed, all seemed to be going smoothly when Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, produced evidence of Edward IV's betrothal, and a betrothal in those days constituted a valid marriage. Stillington had suffered for his secret: Edward IV, when he murdered his

1483

*Richard the Third*

XVII

brother George on vague charges of conspiracy, locked this bishop up for "uttering words prejudicial to the King and the State," only later to release him, probably when the bishop swore to keep the secret. But now, faced with the possibility of another civil war under the rule of a minor, Stillington had thought best to speak out.

There was only one man who could take the throne, and that was Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

He must have accepted with reluctance, knowing that the Woodville faction—those who wished the boy to be King so that they could graft to their hearts' content under a minor—would never let him rule in peace. But England needed a strong King, and Richard, young though he was, had proved himself a soldier the equal of his brother, than which there could be no greater praise; his rule in the north had been wise and just; his loyalty to his brother had been so strong that he had even discarded his love for Anne Neville because of it; his honesty had been proved in France when not only every English noble but also the King himself had been bribed to leave the country: Richard alone had refused that bribe and had thereby made a deadly enemy of France; he was so trusted that one of the conspirators he executed declared in his will that he wanted Richard to be supervisor of that will. And when Elizabeth Woodville, Edward V's mother, at last left sanctuary she not only became Richard's staunchest friend—although traducers allege that he had murdered her son, Edward V—she plotted for him to marry her daughter, his niece, and

### RICHARD III

wrote to another son of hers, Dorset, in France, telling him to give over his conspiracies against Richard and to come to England.

This was the new King of England, Richard III, whose coronation was fixed for Sunday, July 6, 1483.

RICHARD'S was the most gorgeous coronation that had ever been known, and we are lucky to possess more or less full details of the costumes in the wardrobe accounts. Nearly the whole peerage of England attended, which was unusual in those factious times. Richard was a dandy, and he showed himself in all his splendour when with his beloved golden-headed wife, Anne Neville, he set out from the Tower for Westminster.

Richard was dressed in a doublet of blue cloth-of-gold, wrought with pearls and pine-apples [pine-cones], with a long ermine-furred gown of purple velvet—a gift from his Queen—resting on the rump of his horse; saddle and harness were of crimson cloth-of-gold sprinkled with roses. In her litter, drawn by two horses, the Queen followed the King.

The procession through the west door of the Abbey was superb, the Barons of the Cinque Ports holding the canopy over Richard; behind the King, bearing his train, strode the Duke of Buckingham who almost outshone Richard with his gorgeous apparel. Wearing a "circle of gold with many precious stones set therein," Queen Anne followed her husband, and her train was upheld by sly Margaret Beaufort, the Countess of

Richmond, now wife of Lord Stanley. It was by the machinations of this woman, mother of Henry Tudor, that Richard was to be betrayed at Bosworth. He caught her plotting once and, always merciful, pardoned her so that eventually she lived to destroy him. Now meekly, yet scheming, always behind that thin white mask, she followed golden-haired Queen Anne into the Abbey.

The ceremony followed the old custom. Before the high altar, we are startled to read, "the King and Queen put off their robes, and there stood all naked from the middle upwards, and anon the bishops anointed both the King and Queen." But this means purely that their long gowns were taken off: the doublets would be slit and linked in the customary manner. Now the robes of purple velvet were exchanged for robes of cloth-of-gold, and both were crowned by the Cardinal Arch-bishop of Canterbury.

At four in the afternoon the banquet followed in the great hall. There were four principal tables: the royal one on the dais, the bishops' table, the earls', and the barons'. On the King's left sat the Queen, "nigh at the board's end"; the other ladies sat at tables according to their rank, apart from the men, in the centre of the hall. "Two esquires lay under the board at the King's feet." Sir Robert Dymock, the Champion, entered, "his horse being trapped with white silk and red, and himself in white harness [armour]; the heralds-of-arms standing upon a stage among all the company. Then the King's Champion rode up before the King, asking, before all the people, if there was any

# RICHARD III

man would say against King Richard III why he should not pretend to the crown. And when he had so said, all the hall cried *King Richard!* all with one voice. And when this was done, anon one of the lords brought unto the Champion a covered cup full of red wine, and so he took the cup and uncovered it, and drank thereof. And when he had done, anon he cast out the wine and covered the cup again; and making his obeisance to the King, turned his horse about, and rode through the hall, with his cup in his right hand, and that he had for his labour."

The banquet had apparently been delayed, for we learn that when the third course appeared, "it was so late that there might no service be served saving waters [thin biscuits] and Ipocrace [a sweet wine]. And when this was done, anon came into the hall great lights of wax torches and torchets; and as soon as the lights came up into the hall the lords began to rise from their boards and yed [went] up to the King, making their obeisance."

BRIEF was to be the reign of this tragic King, but even its brevity cannot conceal its wisdom. Enemy historians like Lord Campbell are forced to confess that his parliament was "the most meritorious national assembly for protecting the liberty of the subject, and putting down abuses in the administration of justice that had sat in England since the reign of Henry III": while Bishop Langton, who knew the King, and who travelled with

<sup>1</sup> *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England*, by John Lord Campbell (John Murray), 1848, vol. i.

him on his progress through England shortly after the coronation writes: "He contents the people where he goes best than ever prince did, for many a poor man that hath suffered wrong many days has been relieved and helped by him and his commands in his progress. And in many great cities and towns were great sums of money given him which he hath refused. On my truth I never liked the conditions of any prince so well as this. God hath sent him to us for the weal [welfare] of us all."

This was the King whom Tudor-pamphleteers were to hold up as a monster both in body and mind, the man they insisted who stole a throne and suffocated helpless children in the Tower. Killed by treason at Bosworth, Richard's death must have appalled England. The stricken city of York entered in its records: "He was pitiously slain and murdered to the great heaviness of this city." The young pathetic King, youngest of our Kings—if we exclude Edward VI, who never really reigned—to die upon our throne, for he was only thirty, and the first since Harold to be slain, defending his country against an invader, has been traduced for centuries, damned in the great verse of Marlowe or some other Elizabethan toadying to the Tudor Queen—in a play touched up perhaps by Shakespeare—and few voices have been raised in his defence.

He was slim and not tall, blue-eyed, brown-haired, and with a prominent nose; it would seem from Rous's portrait in Windsor Castle that he had lost

### RICHARD III

his teeth, for the mouth is sunken. The story of his crouchback is a deliberate lie no longer accepted even by those historians who refuse to recognise Richard's greatness; the tale was invented by Henry VII to blacken the glorious memory of his predecessor. Stow, the Elizabethan antiquary, tells us that he had talked with old men who had known Richard in their youth and they told him "that he was of bodily shape comely enough, only of low stature." There are only two vague contemporary references to any deformity, and both are from biased sources; one writer tells us that Richard's left shoulder was higher than his right, the other says that his right shoulder was higher than his left. That tiny piece of conflicting evidence is the only basis for any belief in Richard's crouchback; the other popular lies about him have even less root, in fact.

But too often have I written on this subject, and it is surely unnecessary to cover the ground again? But I fear it is sadly necessary. It takes so long for minds to attune themselves to any fresh idea—although this conception of Richard is not fresh, for immediately after the death of the last Tudor, Elizabeth, men began to tell the truth—that one must keep on crying in a wilderness of indifference against this, the most damnable lie in our history.

Around his helmet of polished steel Richard had worn a gold circlet, and this was discovered

died.

troops rushed between them, and the young King was on Henry himself when another of the Stanleys' bearer, overthrew the giant Sir John Cheney, and death. Richard slashed down Henry's standard-kept the lions of England flying even as he bled to ground with both legs cut from under him: yet he Henry Tudor. His standard-bearer fell to the battle-axe through the falling enemy, seeking lines. The young King hewed a path with his heroic charge was enough to smash the Tudor skulked behind his guards; nevertheless, Richard's But killing Henry was not so easy a matter, for he kill Henry, he knew that the battle would cease. charged in one last desperate throw: if he could traitor and was attacking him on the flank, he seeing that Henry Tudor's father-in-law had turned. When Richard III realised that he was doomed, his troops, nevertheless he had been almost killed. England. He had not fought, he had hidden behind of the slain, Henry VII was crowned King of On the field of Bosworth, sodden with the blood

1485

*Henry the Seventh*

XVIII



## HENRY VII

pushed beneath a hawthorn bush, probably hidden there by some thief. One of the Stanleys placed it about the partially bald head of the Welsh usurper, Henry Tudor, now Henry VII. The ground where he received the chaplet is to this day called Crown Hill.

This, however, was not a coronation, and the actual ceremony took place on Sunday, October 30, in Westminster Abbey. It was a miserly affair of which we have few records, although there exists in the *Rulland Papers* a most comprehensive "little device for the coronation of the most high, mighty, and Christian prince, Henry VII"; but this should be treated very cautiously as there is no proof that it was ever used. It must have been drawn up, probably by some herald, very soon after the usurpation as a blank is left for "the most noble prince's dame." The one notable thing to be mentioned of this occasion was the institution of a standing army. Knowing his unpopularity, Henry created a personal bodyguard, the Yeomen of the Guard—an order still existing.

There were many reasons why Henry skimped his coronation; in the first place, he was a miserly creature, but even more important than this was the fact that his claim to the throne was so flimsy that he scarcely dared to put it forward. It was based on descent from Henry V's widow—which was no claim whatever, as after Henry's death she had married a Welsh squire, Henry's ancestor, with no royalty in his blood, and her lineage was purely French—and on descent from John of Gaunt

through his mother Margaret Beaufort. Even if we accept this claim—which is unacceptable because the Beauforts were a bastard branch declared by parliament incapable of reigning—there should have been a Queen Margaret and not a King Henry, for the mother would naturally take precedence over the son. Henry's one chance of winning the allegiance of the people was by marrying Edward IV's daughter, Elizabeth of York, but again he was grafting himself on to a rotten branch, for Elizabeth with her brother Edward V had been declared illegitimate. Henry's method of disposing of this question was to try to destroy it; he ordered the act of parliament to be repealed that gave Richard's title to the throne, and he threatened fines or imprisonment on any one who dared to retain a copy; he locked up Stillington in Windsor Castle and never let him out again; Elizabeth Woodville, the mother of Edward V, he pushed into a monastery and seized her goods. His professional historian, Polydore Vergil, got busy and "committed as many of our ancient manuscript volumes to the flames as would have filled a wagon."

By lying and destroying documents, Henry might think to cover the truth of his usurpation and to vilify Richard, but he could not succeed. His throne was insecure, and although he and his son, Henry VIII, murdered every Plantagenet they could get into their power until the whole male branch was wiped out, the Tudor throne could never rest securely on the baseless Lancastrian title. Yet if he declared Elizabeth of

York legitimate, he automatically declared her brothers legitimate, and that meant that he had invaded England purely to put Edward V on the throne. That was no good to Henry, and it was for this reason that I am perfectly certain he murdered the two princes, the crime which he placed on the memory of that noble King, Richard III. There is no actual evidence as to the real murderer, but the facts when examined carefully, point far more accusingly at Henry than they do at Richard who had no reason whatever to kill his nephews.

To make the people's loyalty strong, Henry therefore rushed through his own coronation and, two years after his marriage, gave Elizabeth of York a most gorgeous crowning on Sunday, November 24, 1487.

On the previous Friday she was rowed from the Palace of Greenwich to the Tower of London where Henry awaited her; all the barges of the London companies came to meet her on the glistening Thames. There was the bachelors' barge from Lincoln's Inn with a mighty red dragon rising out of it in honour of Henry's alleged descent from the Welsh King, Cadwallader; and as the oars briskly slashed the waters, this dragon "spouted flames of fire into the Thames." It kept pace with the Queen's barge, and the young men of Lincoln's Inn, dressed in the gayest of finery, played sweet music as their red pasteboard dragon quivered like a live thing to the swift jerking of oars sliding against rowlocks.

The following day began the state ride from the Tower. Elizabeth had all the beauty of the Yorkists. We possess her portrait wearing the sharp-arched hood, and can well picture her as she was drawn through the London streets, lying plumply in her litter big-bodied with golden hair, being dressed in white damasked cloth-of-gold, and with white cloth-of-gold mantle furred with ermine drawn across her breast with an intricate lace cordage of gold-tasselled silk. "On her fair yellow hair, hanging at length down her back, she wore a caul of pipes [a piped net] and a circle of gold, richly adorned with gems."

Her lovely young sister, Cicely, upheld her

train when she entered the Abbey, walking over the striped worsted; this carpet was the perquisite of the people, but so excited became the mob at seeing the beautiful Elizabeth that they cut and ripped the worsted to scraps before she had finished treading on it. It was against etiquette for the King to be present at his Queen's coronation, for this was her day of honour; nevertheless, Henry watched through lattice-work—could he have been afraid that his Queen, sister of Edward V, might tell the truth unless she knew his eye was on her? He also watched the banquet that followed, and saw Elizabeth of York eat of the messes of sweets and meats confused; as she ate, a cloth would now and then be lowered over her face, as was the medieval custom, so that she might spit out what she did not like, or spew if she should overeat or overdrink.

It was a gorgeous ceremony, but could it have

compensated Elizabeth for the misery of her life with the first of the Tudors? "He showed himself," Lord Bacon tells us, "no very indulgent husband towards her, though she was beautiful, gentle, and fruitful."

HENRY VIII loved the grand manner. A true Renaissance King, he was not satisfied unless he excelled in everything, in sport, art, politics, and flamboyance. This young giant combined Yorkist and Tudor characteristics; from his grandfather, Edward IV, through his mother, he inherited his superb physique, his athlete's body, six feet two inches tall, and with a chest of forty-two inches—that was before he grew fat, owing to that wretched jousting accident in 1536 when his horse smashed the varicose veins in his legs and incapacitated him from further exercise. You can see the change in the Tower armours: the lovely horseback-suit he wore when young, with its fluted skirt beside the huge great-bellied tower that fitted him in age. The syphilis theory of Henry's leg, created out of the shrewd brain of the late Dr. MacLaurin in *Mere Mortals*, has been for ever dismissed by Frederick Chamberlin who, with great patience, collected every contemporary record of Henry's illnesses and submitted these facts to four doctors—two British and two American—each an authority on venereal disease or obstetrics. Medical men are naturally cautious in giving an opinion, yet these four experts all more or less dismiss the syphilis

182

1509

*Henry the Eighth*

XIX

## HENRY VIII

theory, one stating that there was "no evidence" for it, another that it was "none proven," a third that it was "flimsy," a fourth that the evidence was "insufficient." As Mr. Chamberlin clearly proved, Henry suffered from ulcers caused by this jousting fall!

With his love of splendour, Henry staged a magnificent coronation for himself and his bride, Katherine of Aragon, and the miserly soul of Henry VII must have writhed under Torregiano's beautiful sculpture in the Abbey as he saw the money he had accumulated with such careful greed being thrown away by his open-handed son. Henry VII had died a millionaire, and Henry VIII's tastes were worthy of the money: he knew how to spend it.

In a robe of crimson velvet, furred with ermine over a coat of raised gold, he rode from the Tower to the Abbey. He rippled blindingly with jewels. Behind him came his wife, Katherine of Aragon, attractive in her youth before she became the fat bovine creature of later years; she lay in her litter of white cloth-of-gold drawn by two white horses, and her gown was of white embroidered satin. As she was so recently a bride, she wore her hair unbound, for that was the custom—a symbol of virginity—and it reached to her heels; around her brow was a coronal of Orient gems pulsing with light. Nine children dressed in blue velvet rode nearby, representing Henry's possessions—England, Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, Gascony, Guienne,

CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

Normandy, Anjou, and France. The city as usual was bedecked with banners and tapestries and painted cloths; Cornhill, being the wealthiest street, outshone the others with yards and yards of cloth-of-gold.

The coronation proceeded in the ancient manner in the Abbey on June 24, near the new and beautiful chapel built by Henry VII to house the corpses of himself and his mother who fell ill just before her grandson's coronation and died five days later. At the ceremony, while all were rejoicing in the splendid show, watching the young giant of a King in his red doublet, the Lady Margaret Beaufort prophesied doom, as is the way with mothers and grandmothers when their descendants make merry.

GLORIOUS as was all this pageantry it was even excelled when, having divorced dull Katherine, Henry had crowned his new dark-haired quick-eyed Queen, the Lady Anne Boleyn. But the joy of this occasion was by no means created purely by the King. London—which had been intensely anti-papist for the last few hundred years—became so excited because Henry, through love of this Anne, had snapped the links that bound England to Rome, that the citizens opened their purses as never before. When the Queen left Greenwich for the Tower before her state ride to Westminster, innumerable barges rowed from the city, filled with men of the crafts in their gay livery, banners waving, music playing; and as they escorted Anne to the Tower, an unknown chronicler



Anne's progress from the Tower to the Abbey was a triumph. Pageants and songs greeted her on every side. She lay in her litter, "costly and richly beseen, with a rich canopy over her," borne by the Barons of the Cinque Ports; "after her followed the Master of her Horse with a spare white palfrey richly appointed, and led in his hand. Then followed her noble ladies of estate richly clothed in crimson, powdered with ermine, to the number of twelve. Then the Master of the Guard, with a guard on both sides of the streets in good array; and all the constables well beseen in velvet and damask coats, with white staves in their hand[s], setting every man in array and order in the streets, until she came to Westminster. Then followed four rich chariots with ladies of honour. After them followed thirty ladies and gentlewomen richly garnished: and so the serving men after them. And as she was departed from the Tower a marvellously great shot of guns was there fired and shot off. So this most noble company passed, till her grace came to Fenchurch Street, and at Fenchurch Street

tells us that "to write what number of gunshots—what with chambers [small cannon] and great pieces of ordnance—were shot off as she passed by, in divers places, and especially at Ratcliffe and at Linchouse out of certain ships, it passes my memory to write or to tell the number of them. . . . Also, ere she came near the Tower, there were shot off innumerable pieces of ordnance as ever there was there by any man's remembrance: where the King received her grace with a noble, loving countenance."

began the pageants, tableaux of charade-like symbolism.

Nicholas Udall's delightful lyrics, written for the occasion, have saved some of these pageants from the usual rather dull moralities. At Cornhill, for example, was sung a truly lovely poem, of which these few extracts must suffice—it should be remembered that Anne's badge was a falcon:

*This White Falcon,  
rare and geason [extraordinary],  
this bird shineth so bright;  
of all that are,  
no birds compare  
may with this Falcon White.  
This gentle [noble] bird  
as white as curd  
shineth both day and night;  
nor far nor near  
is any peer  
unto this Falcon White.  
Of body small,  
of power regal,  
she is, and sharp of sight;  
of courage hault [high]  
no manner fault  
is in this Falcon White.  
In chastity,  
excelleth she,  
most like a virgin bright:  
and worthy is  
to live in bliss  
always this Falcon White.*

Rocking nonchalantly towards her coronation at Westminster, the words must have echoed sweetly in the ears of ambitious Anne . . . they would not have sounded so sweet, they would have been bitter, had they come to her that cold morning when again she was to leave the Tower, for the last time.

Wheron go rest,  
and build her nest;  
GOD grant her, most of might!  
that England may  
rejoice alway  
in this same Falcon White.

And where by wrong,  
she hath been long,  
herself repose  
upon the Rose,  
now may this Falcon White.

HEERY VIII

Edward was eight and a half years of age when his father died in January 1547; he was crowned during the next month, on Sunday the 20th. The ceremony was carried out with the usual splendour.

*But crazy cold lurked all this while at court,  
to watch his time when he the King might hurt:  
and when he saw him, on a morning, sweat,  
and call for drink to cool his tennis heat,  
he slyly crept and hid him in the cup;  
and when the King, alas, had drunk him up,  
into his stomach downward he had got,  
and there perceiving all the inwards hot,  
and that each part full greedily did pluck,  
to save itself, all succour it might suck,  
he marked the chill that went into the lungs,  
and th'roughly mixed his virtue thereamong's.*

It was natural that the Tudors should pretend that there had been an Edward V and should therefore acclaim the son of Henry VIII, Edward VI, on his father's death. Had this boy lived, it is more than possible that he would have become a great King, but phthisis tore his lungs, and pushed him into his death-bed when he was only fifteen years and nine months of age:

1547

*Edward the Sixth*

XX

Wearing a gown of cloth-of-silver embroidered and damasked with gold, girdled with white velvet embroidered with Venetian silver, with diamonds, rubies, and true-lovers' knots of pearls, a white velvet cap on his fair head, and velvet buskins on his legs, the boy-king rode from the Tower to Westminster. His horse was caparisoned with crimson satin embroidered with pearls and damasked with gold.

So that the Londoners might look upon their new King, he rode a little ahead of the state canopy with his uncle, cunning Protector Somerset, close behind him. As it was February weather, wet and frosty, the streets had been newly gravelled so that the horses should not slip, and railings had been built along the streets—for there were no footpaths in those days—to keep back the cheering mob. Wine flowed from conduits, and the inevitable pagants halted the procession now and then, at one of which the people sang what is believed to be the origin of our modern national anthem:

*King Edward, King Edward,  
God save King Edward,  
God save King Edward,  
King Edward the Sixth!  
To have the sword,  
his subjects to defend,  
his enemies to put down,  
according to right, in every town;  
and long to continue,  
in grace and virtue,  
unto God's pleasure*

# CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

his commons to rejoice!  
 whom we ought to honour, to love, and to dread  
 as our most noble King  
 and sovereign lord,  
 next unto God, of England and Ireland the supreme  
 head;  
 whom God hath chosen  
 by His mercy so good.  
 Good Lord! in heaven to thee we sing,  
 grant our noble King to reign and spring,  
 from age to age  
 like Solomon the sage,  
 whom God preserve in peace and war,  
 and safely keep him from all danger.

Later, there was a really excellent song, which the  
 King was in too great a hurry to listen to:

King Edward upspringeth from puerility,  
 and towards us bringeth joy and tranquillity;  
 our hearts may be light, and merry our cheer,  
 he shall be of such might that all the world may him  
 fear.

Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
 but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!

His father, late our sovereign, each day and also hour,  
 that in joy he might reign, like a prince in high power,  
 by sea and land, hath provided for him eke [too],  
 that never King of England had ever the like.  
 Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
 but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!

*He hath gotten already Bullen [Boulogne] that goodly town,  
and biddeth sing speedily up and down,  
when he waxeth weight, and to manhood down spring,  
he shall be without fail of four realms the King.  
Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!*

*Ye, children of England, for the hour of the same,  
take bow and shaft in hand, learn shooage to frame,  
that you another day so do your parts  
as to serve your King as well with hands as with hearts.  
Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!*

There was pageant after pageant, and we can scarcely blame the young King for spurring past many of them before they were finished. One enthusiast who had prepared a superb lecture, telling the young King to imitate the old King, found himself with the lecture unspoken, and had it printed and thrown amongst the people who probably found better use for it than ever the King could have found. Edward also dug back his spurs to escape a gentleman in the garb of Edward the Confessor who began an ode, first in Latin, then in English. On one occasion Edward did pull up, and that was to watch the exciting spectacle of a Spanish rope-dancer who glided on his chest, not using hands or feet, on a tight-rope all the way from St. Paul's steeple to the deanery gate, shooting down like an arrow from a bow; he then performed various other feats, much to the King's delight.

# CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

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Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!



# EDWARD VI

He hath gotten already Bullen [Boulogne] that goodly town,  
 and biddeth sing speedily up and down,  
 when he waxeth weigliht, and to manhood down spring,  
 he shall be without fail of four realms the King.  
 Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
 but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!

Ye, children of England, for the hour of the same,  
 take bow and shaft in hand, learn shooage to frame,  
 that you another day so do your parts  
 as to serve your King as well with hands as with hearts.  
 Sing up, heart; sing up, heart; sing no more down,  
 but joy in King Edward that weareth the crown!

There was pagant after pagant, and we can scarcely blame the young King for spurring past many of them before they were finished. One enthusiast who had prepared a superb lecture, telling the young King to imitate the old King, found himself with the lecture unspoken, and had it printed and thrown amongst the people who probably found better use for it than ever the King could have found. Edward also dug back his spurs to escape a gentleman in the garb of Edward the Confessor who began an ode, first in Latin, then in English. On one occasion Edward did pull up, and that was to watch the exciting spectacle of a Spanish rope-dancer who glided on his chest, not using hands or feet, on a tight-rope all the way from St. Paul's steeple to the deanery gate, shooting down like an arrow from a bow; he then performed various other feats, much to the King's delight.

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

When next day the ceremony began in the Abbey, little Edward was most interested in everything. He asked what the three swords represented, and on being told that Curtana stood for mercy, and the other two for temporal and for spiritual justice, "That," said Edward wisely, "should be represented by the Bible, which is the sword of the spirit."

Great care was taken not to fatigue the boy, and whenever he had to change chairs, four ushers lifted him.

The banquet followed, and the Challenge, and then there were jousts. There was only one complaint about the coronation—trade suffered because no women were present, and the mercers, jewellers, embroiderers, and tailors of London made not their usual profit.

For the first time in English history a Queen was crowned alone without a consort. Red-headed, sullen-faced Mary I, after easily putting aside the pretensions of poor Queen Jane, was crowned Queen of England on Sunday, October 1.

Protestant writers have damned her as Bloody Mary, but we can forgive much fanaticism in her character when we recall her tragic childhood; hated by her father because he loathed her mother, she had lived under the continual threat of poison or the axe, bullied until she had had to pretend to renounce her faith in the Roman Catholic church, whatever souring such a childhood gave the woman, surely it is forgivable? And she was not healthy. Inevitably she became neurotic; she suffered from indigestion, bad teeth, melancholia, palpitations of the heart, colic, and at the end, died painfully of dropsy.

"SITTING in a chariot of tissue [a rich cloth woven with gold and silver], drawn with six horses, all bestrapped with red velvet," Queen Mary set out on her state ride from the Tower, dressed in "a gown of blue velvet, furred with powdered ermine, hanging on her head a call of cloth-of-linsel beset

1553

*Mary the First*

XXI

with pearl[s] and stone[s], and about the same upon her head a round circlet of gold, much like a hooped garland, beset so richly with many precious stones that the value thereof was inestimable; the said call and circle being so massy and ponderous that she was fain to bear up her head with her hands; and a canopy was borne over the chair. . . . After the Queen's chariot came another chariot having [a] canopy all of one covering, with cloth-of-silver all white, and six horses betrapped with the same, bearing the said chariot; and therein sat at the end, with her face forward, the Lady Elizabeth [later Queen]; and at the other end, with her back forward, the Lady Anne of Cleves [divorced wife of Henry VIII.]. Then came there sundry gentlewomen riding on horses trapped with red velvet, after that chariot, and their gowns and kirtles of red velvet likewise." It is probable that the wretched Mary, as Miss Agnes Strickland suggests, suffered from one of her periodic headaches.

The inevitable pageants halted the procession at various points of the city. "At the end of Grace-church Street," for example, there was a pageant "made by the Florentines, very high, on the top whereof there stood four pictures [symbols, probably figures], and on the side of them, on the highest top, there stood an angel clothed in green, with a trumpet in his hand, and he was made with such a device that when the trumpeter, who stood secretly in the pageant, did blow his trumpet, the angel did put his trumpet to his mouth, as though it should be he that did the same, to the

marvelling of many ignorant people. . . .” Pagan after pagan, orations in Latin and English, songs of rejoicings, hymns, little girls in women’s clothes kneeling as the Queen’s chariot was jerked over the cobbles. “At this time a fellow who had made two scaffolds upon the top of Paul’s steeple, the one upon the ball thereof, and the other upon the top thereof above that, and had set out eight streamers vean great [? very great] upon the same scaffold, having the red cross and the sword as the arms of the city of London doth give; and he himself standing upon the very top or back of the weathercock, di[d] shake a little flag with his hand, after standing on one foot di[d] shake his other leg, and then knecled on his knees upon the said weathercock, to the great marvel and wondering of all the people which beheld him, because it was thought a matter impossible.” Stow supplies the above anonymous chronicler—“a Resident in the Tower of London”—by telling us that this courageous acrobat was “one Peter a Dutchman” and that he received from the city £16 13s. 4d. for all expenses.

Blue cloth, railed in on each side, led from the Palace to the Abbey when Mary prepared for her coronation. The procession started before eleven in the morning, the Queen walking under the canopy of the Barons of the Cinque Ports. Behind her came Anne of Cleves and young Elizabeth. The coronation proceeded with all pomp, a celebration actually to the brief return of Roman Catholicism; and the fact that Mary was Queen,

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

not King, made no difference to the elaborate ritual, nor to the banquet afterwards, nor to the Champion who rode in to fling his gage upon the rushes on the floor.

To describe in detail the ceremony would be only to repeat more or less what has already been written of other sovereigns, so let us then use again the words of "a Resident in the Tower of London," who merely tells us that the Queen "was led four or five times on [to] the altar, with so many and sundry ceremonies in anointing, crowning, and other old customs, that it was past three almost four of the clock at night [p.m.] ere ever she came from the church again. And as she came homeward there was borne before her three swords sheathed and one naked [Curtana]. She was led likewise between the old Bishop of Durham and [blank], having in her hand a sceptre of gold, and in her other hand a ball of gold, which she twirled and turned in her hand as she came homeward."

Although the exchequer was very depleted, the glory of Elizabeth's procession has rarely been excelled, not because of its pomp and ostentation, but for the simple charm of the Queen who would stop and speak to poor people and would gratefully take nosegays of little flowers from simple women in the streets. She saw an old man crying as she passed. "Yonder is an alderman," said one of the knights who bore her canopy, "which weepeth and turneth his face backward." "I warrant you it is for gladness," said the Queen, who would let no dark omen shadow this happy day. In Chapside, suddenly she smiled, and on being

preceding.  
state ride from the Tower on the Saturday January 15, it was—Elizabeth setting out on her day on which to begin the new reign, so Sunday, January 15, would be the most auspicious. He agreed with Elizabeth's privy council that future when she had been only a despised prisoner. his foretelling of Mary I's death and Elizabeth's and his prognostications were often uncanny, as was a man of huge learning and utter sincerity, Elizabeth's coronation. Dee was no charlatan; he Dr. Dee, the astrologer, decided on the date for

1559

*Elizabeth*

XXII

asked why, she answered that she had heard one say, "Remember old King Henry VIII?" Girlishly excited, she continually smiled and laughed. Seeing a pageant ahead, she asked what it represented. "Time," she was told. "Time?" she repeated, "and time hath brought me hither!" It was a most glorious procession. The dramatist, George Ferrers, tells us how the Queen, "by holding up her hands, and merry countenance to such as stood afar off, and most tender and gentle language to those that stood nigh to her grace, showed herself no less thankfully to receive her people's goodwill than they lovingly offered it unto her. To all that 'wished her grace well!' she gave 'Hearty thanks!' and to such as bade 'God save her grace!' she said again, 'God save them all! and thanked with all her heart.' So that, on either side, there was nothing but gladness! nothing but prayer! nothing but comfort! . . . The people, again, were wonderfully ravished with the loving answers and gestures of their princess."

Near Fenchurch Street was the first pageant. To merry music, a child leaned from a scaffold to pipe a song of praise; noting him, the Queen ordered her chariot to stop, and sat there, listening to these words:

O peerless Sovereign Queen! Behold, what this thy town  
hath thee presented with, at thy First Entrance here!  
Behold! with how rich hope, she leadeth thee to thy  
Crown!

Behold, with what two gifts, she comforteth thy cheer!  
198



child to explain what it meant.

and much else with "loud noises of music," and a Elizabeth with great red and white roses; all this York and Lancaster, figures of Henry VII and was a symbolic representation of the union of and hearts." At the end of Gracechurch Street touched either her person, or the people's tongues marvellous change in look, as the child's words besides a perpetual attentiveness in her face, a countenance, during the time that the child spake, them. "Here was noted in the Queen Majesty's shout," and the Queen thanked both the city and And at the last word the people "gave a great

*well!*

"GOD, thee preserve!" we pray; and wish thee ever

*shrink!*

welcome to joyous Tongues, and Hearts that will not

Welcome again, O Queen! as much as tongue can tell,

Welcome, therefore, O Queen! as much as heart can think,

which skip for joy, whenas they hear thy happy name!

which Faithfulness has won, and all untruth driven out;

whose Suit is Triumph now, and ruleth all the game,

*root!*

The Second is True Hearts! which love thee from their

tongues can lie.

which to thy Kingdom "Hapses!" [Hips!], all that in

which wish to thee long life! which bless this happy day!

*sky!*

Which pray, thou may'st do well! why praise thee to the

say.

The First is Blessing Tongues! which many a "Welcome!"

ELIZABETH

Pageant after pageant, until at the end of Chepe the city gave a more acceptable offering—a purse of crimson satin, richly wrought with gold, containing a thousand marks in gold (over £5000 to-day); and taking this gift, the Queen graciously answered, “I thank my lord mayor, his brethren, and you all! And whereas your request is, that I shall continue your good Lady and Queen: be ye ensured that I will be as good unto you, as ever Queen was to her people! no will in me can lack! neither, do I trust, shall there lack any power! and persuade yourselves that, for the safety and quietness of you all, I will not spare, if need be, to shed my blood! God thank you all!”

At the Little Conduit in Chepe there was a most elaborate pageant of Time and Time’s daughter and a child who explained its symbolism: and her, his daughter TRUTH, which holdeth yonder book;

whom he out of his rock hath brought forth to us all, from whence, these many years, she durst not once outlook. The rueful wight that sitteth under the barren tree, resembleth to us the form when Commonwealth decay; but when they be in state triumphant, you may see by him in fresh attire, that sitteth under the bay.

Now since that TIME again, his daughter TRUTH hath brought;

we trust, O worthy Queen! thou wilt this Truth embrace! and since thou understandest the good estate and nought; we trust Wealth thou wilt plant, and Barrenness displace!

## ELIZABETH II

*But for to heal the sore, and cure that is not seen,  
 which thing the Book of Truth doth teach in writing  
 plain;  
 she doth present to thee, the same, O worthy Queen!  
 for that, that words do fly, but writing doth remain.*

The child then gave the Queen the Bible in English as a symbolic gesture to show that Roman Catholicism was expelled from England, for under Roman Catholicism no one was allowed to translate the Scriptures. "With both her hands," the Queen held up the book, after kissing it; then she clasped it to her breast, "to the great comfort of the lookers-on," who realised that the reign of the priests was definitely over, and that there was at last a Protestant Queen upon the throne.

As with Mary, the path from Palace to Abbey was railed off for Elizabeth, and was carpeted with blue velvet when she entered for her coronation. The gospel and epistle were read in English and, kneeling, Elizabeth recited the Lord's Prayer. Then she was anointed: evidently an unpleasant experience, as she later remarked that the holy oil "was greasy, and that it smelt ill."

During the banquet afterwards, the inevitable Lymock thundered on horseback into the hall, armour clanking, and shouted his defiance, but what is of interest to us is the herald's proclamation afterwards. They announced that the Champion was there to defend "the most high and mighty princess, our dread sovereign lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England,

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

France, Ireland, defender of the true, ancient, and  
 catholic faith, most worthy empress from the  
 Orcade Isles to the mountains Pyrenée. A largesse,  
 largesse, largesse!"

Well, after all, in not so long a time, Elizabeth  
 was to be called even nobler, more flamboyant  
 names by Spenser and the hurly-burly of other  
 court-poets.

There was a plague in London when James I arrived there from Scotland; for this reason the state ride was postponed until seven months after the actual coronation. On that day, Monday, July 25, the King with his Queen, Anne of Denmark, walked from Westminster steps to the Abbey with a few attendants; probably many of them had been ordered to remain away for fear that they might bring contagion with them, yet it is surprising to discover that amongst those present none was above the rank of earl. The unfortunate city had already wasted a great amount of money in building triumphal arches and devising pageants; these had now to be stored away for next year, while if any citizen rowed near Westminster he was warned that he would suffer death.

After the heralds and London magnates, trumpeters, drummers, and fifes in scarlet cloaks, followed by the King's chaplains in scarlet gowns, strode into the Abbey. First on their heels came judges and serjeants-at-law in scarlet and Knights of the Bath in purple satin. Officers of the court came next in short crimson velvet gowns; next, the singing-men of the chapel in rich capes; they all entered the quire. Then came barons and earls.

1603

*James the First*

XXXIII

and bishops in scarlet gowns faced with sable; they sat on scarlet-covered benches around the theatre; then the earls carrying cap-of-maintenance, sceptre, and crown. At last came the King lapped in robes of crimson velvet lined with ermine. He sat on the chair-of-state in the centre of the stage; after him entered the Queen in robes of crimson velvet, her crowned yellow hair unpinned, folding about her; she curtsied to the King, then sat on his left hand.

Three times, King-of-Arms cried to those present, "Listen!" Then the Archbishop gave the accustomed question—Would they accept James as their King, and there came the accustomed answer, "Yea, yea!" and they added, "God save King James!" while the little King himself stood up and twisted himself to every side. There was a slight variation in the ritual of the anointing; for some reason James did not wear the usual red shirt. When stripped of robes, he stood before the Archbishop in vest and hose of white satin, unlaced.

James was not a dignified King, even his ail-

ment—such as hæmorrhoids—were undignified, and his coronation was carried through in a very jolly and intimate manner. The Venetian Secretary who was present, tells us that during the act of homage, "the earls and then the barons went and kissed the King's hand, which they did in this manner. They made, one by one, a bow at the foot of the throne, and then, going up the steps, they knelt on a cushion, kissing the right hand; and they also touched the King's crown, who gave them his

## JAMES I

hand, which they kissed; and some of the earls instead of touching the crown kissed it, and the Earl of Pembroke, a young man of twenty-seven, of whom the King is very fond, instead of kissing the King's crown, kissed the King's face, and the King, laughing, gave him a slap; but it was in joke; and the King shows himself with all most familiar, laughing, chatting, and squeezing their hands." But James always preferred the love of men to the love of women.

One of the most interesting points of the coronation was that "while the King was receiving the Lord's Supper the Queen did not move from her throne"; she was a Roman Catholic and proclaimed it by this fact.

The postponed progress through London was carried out on March 15 of the following year, but the delay had robbed it of all significance. This is a pity, because Thomas Dekker had written some truly lovely verses entitled *The Song of Troynovant*, which, as he was careful to explain in a note, were meant to symbolise that London on this happy day was no longer a city because "during these triumphs she puts off her formal habit of trade and commerce, wearing even thrift underfoot, but now becomes a reveller and a courtier." The verses are too good to pass by, however James I behaved, so here they are:

*Troynovant is now no more a city;  
O great pity! is't not a pity?  
And yet her towers on high stand,  
The fragments built on fæerie land,*

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

and her marble arms,  
 like to magick charms,  
 bind thousands fast unto her,  
 that for her wealth and beauty daily woo her,  
 yet for all this, is't not a pity?  
 Troynovant is now no more a city.

Troynovant is now a summer arbour,  
 or the nest wherein doth harbour  
 the Eagle, of all birds, that fly  
 the sovereign, for his piercing eye.

If you wisely mark,  
 'tis beside a park,  
 where runs (being newly born)

with the fierce Lion, the fair Unicorn;  
 or else it is a wedding hall,

where four great kingdoms hold a festival.

Troynovant is now a bridal chamber,  
 whose roof is gold, floor is of amber,  
 by virtue of that holy light

that burns in Hymen's hand, more bright  
 than the silver moon,

or the torch of noon.

Hark, what the echoes say!

Britain till now ne'er kept a holiday!  
 For Jove dwells here; and 'tis no pity,  
 if Troynovant be now no more a city.



Charles arrived by water from the Tower, being rowed to the Abbey in the royal barge; under his robes he wore, as his father had done, a white satin doublet instead of the red shirt, and this later earned him the jeering nickname of the

also refused to attend.  
and dancing in the room." The French ambassador procession while her French ladies were "frisking Palace gate-house from which she could watch the But resist it she did, and took a chamber at the a sixteen-year-old girl to resist the glittering show. heretical; it must have taken great will-power for herself by participating in what she considered was too strong a Roman Catholic to degrade The Queen did not attend the coronation. She the compliment to his Queen whose name was Marie. the Purification of the Virgin Mary was a pretty Day, and he thought that to choose the Feast of date of his crowning because it was Candlemas vanished. He chose Thursday, February 2, as the it months after the coronation enthusiasm had sense to realise that it would be stupid to revive plague; but, unlike his father, he had the good ancient procession through London because of the Like his father, Charles had to put aside the

1626

*Charles the First*

XXXIV

"White King." Entering the Abbey, he slipped, and the Duke of Buckingham leaned forward to support him. Lightly, Charles answered: "I have as much need to help you as you to assist me," words which in after years were given an ominous significance. But if omens were needed to herald in Charles's unfortunate reign, surely an earthquake was sufficient? The ground shook during the ceremony, and there was an even more ominous fact in that the Archbishop's proclamation of Charles's title was not heard by a great many, for "whether some expected he should have spoken more, others hearing not well what he said, hindered those by questioning which might have heard, or that the newness and greatness of the action busied men's thoughts, or the presence of so dear a King drew admiring silence, or that those which were nearest doubted what to do, but not one word followed till my Lord of Arundel told them they should cry out 'God save King Charles.' Upon which, as ashamed of their first oversight, a little shouting followed. At the other sides, where he presented himself, there was not the like failing." Then Fuller points out an even worse calamity, for the preacher, Dr. Senhouse, he tells us, "preached his own funeral, dying shortly after, and even then the black jaundice had so possessed him (a disease which hangs the face with mourning as against its burial) that all despaired of his recovery."

Men also found a sinister significance in St. Edward's staff because it bore a new gilt dove. A wing of the old dove had been snapped off,

and when the King's goldsmith tried to mend it, he left a bad scar; this so enraged Charles that the goldsmith thought it would be simplest to cast a completely new figure, which he did, without Charles noticing the difference.

Laud, whose papist feelings were to arouse such fury later that parliament chopped off his head, sensed nothing ominous in the ceremony. The same evening with wonderful complacence he wrote: "In so great a ceremony and amidst an incredible concourse of people nothing was lost, or broke, or disordered. The theatre was clear for the King, the peers, and the business in hand; and I heard some of the nobility saying to the King in their return that they had never seen any solemnity, although much less, performed with so little noise and so great order."

Later, the Puritan Prynne was to accuse Laud of inserting "divers prayers into the form of the King's coronation taken verbatim out of the Roman pontifical," and it was also alleged by parliament that he deleted certain portions of the oath to the people.

There is no basis whatever for these statements; Charles's coronation apparently closely followed his father's.

Onions are easily discovered after the event. To those who watched at the time there seemed no dangerous augury of the future as the pale, tiny, beautiful, stuttering King sat upon Edward's throne.

of the Cinque wrenching at the canopy; North-into brawls, the King's footmen and the Barons precedence and suchlike problems almost developed regalia had been destroyed, and arguments on that many customs had been forgotten, while the It had been so long since the last coronation

steps and walked to the Abbey.

Day he came in his royal barge to the parliament father because of the plague, and on St. George's poned by his grandfather and ignored by his a custom which, as we have seen, had been post- on jollity that day. Charles rode from the Abbey, long held from cakes and ale, gorged themselves crowned in Westminster Abbey. The English, too ever had been seen in that kingdom," he was when "with the greatest solemnity and glory that the almost hysterical excitement of April 23, 1661, Its dullness, however, was fully compensated by coronation was a quiet, musicless, civil ceremony. in Edward's chair in Westminster Hall, Charles's Cromwell was squatting on the Stone of Destiny the last coronation performed in Scotland. As It was on January 1, 1651, in Scone Parish Church, occasion is of little importance and of less interest. Twice was Charles II crowned, but the first

1661

*Charles the Second*

XXV

## THE INTHRONISATION OF KING CHARLES II

THE ROYAL COLLECTION





umberland and Ossory breathing murder at each other over questions about carrying the regalia. At last everything was settled, and the gay ceremony was carried through.

Amongst those in the Abbey that morning it is fortunate for us that two gossip gentlemen sat resolutely at the imminent risk of being crushed to death—John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. Evelyn's account is a very detailed one, but his pen lacks the fire of Pepys's. Pepys had crawled up into the scaffolding in the north transept, and from there he gazed down at the glittering scene. From four in the morning until eleven, "with a great deal of patience," he waited, gloating on "the abbey raised in the middle all covered with red and a throne (that is a chair) and footstools on the top of it, and all the officers of all kinds so much as the very fiddlers in red vests." These fiddlers became a matter of deep regret to poor Pepys, for later he complains that the tumult was so great "that I could make but little of the music, and indeed it was lost to everybody." These musicians were to play amongst other compositions, Henry Cooke's *Behold, O God and Henry Lawes's Zadok the King*—which must not be confused with the *Zadok the Priest*, played at coronations to this day—the *Priest* is by Handel.

That traitor to all men, General Monk, the miserly, henpecked soldier-of-fortune who had intrigued so cunningly for Charles's return at a goodly price, now strutted as one of the most important of the officials: Pepys gives him the place of honour, mentioning him first; then, he

cries rapturously, entered "the King in his robes, bareheaded, which was very fine." What followed, Pepys was unable to see to his "great grief," but Evelyn had a better seat and carefully noted everything—the anointing by Archbishop Juxon, who was so feeble that he could not finish the service—the crowning and the shouting which so annoyed Pepys. If he couldn't see, at least Pepys could hear, even though he did hear the wrong things. "The crown being put upon his [the King's] head a great shout began," he writes, "and he came forth to the throne and there passed through many ceremonies, as taking the oath and having things read to him by the bishop and his lords (who put on their caps as soon as the King put on his crown)." Shamelessly, Charles took that Protestant oath, but equally shamelessly he had taken the covenanter's oath at Scone and thereby had become "the only covenanted King with God and His people in the whole world."

The King-at-Arms went to the south, west, and north sides of the theatre and "proclaimed that if any one could show any reason why Charles Stewart should not be King of England, that now he should come and speak. And a general pardon also was read by the Lord Chancellor, and medals flung up and down by my Lord Cornwallis of silver, but," says Pepys miserably, "I could not come by any."

Then, the ceremony over, Evelyn tells us that "with the crown imperial on his head, and accompanied with all the nobility in the former order," the King "went on foot upon blue cloth (blue



## CHARLES II

cloth was also laid up the nave to the altar steps), which was spread and reached from ye west door of ye abbey to Westminster stairs where he took water in a triumphal barge to Whitehall where was extraordinary feasting."

That night as the guns at the Tower ended, heaven took up the applause and thundered mightily in reply.

To some this was an evil omen, and to others (of course) it was a happy one.

What neither the fact nor the charm of his brother Charles II. James almost from the moment of his accession irritated the people. For reasons of economy he did not bother to have an inscription placed on Charles's tomb; and for the same reason he very stupidly dispensed with the ancient coronation robe from the Tower, never since to be repeated. Thereby, we are told, he saved £10,000, but he risked the displeasure of London, the true Kingmaker of England. It is impossible to like James. He was a bad-tempered, solemn man with all the stubbornness but without the dignity of his grandfather who had lost his head to the axe. The one redeeming note that comes to all who study his reign is the image of his wife, the stately, beautiful Mary of Modena, whose tragic flight from England must thrill all true romantics. When she was rowed to freedom, the angry Thames smacked her boat as if to drive her back, while her saviour, although close beside her, could not be seen, so dark was the night—a pall of darkness given only by the surge of phosphorus on the waves. But Mary has attraction apart from her romantic escape and pale beauty; during the coronation ceremony her

1685

*James the Second*

LXXI

behaviour won applause from the most suspicious of watchers while they balefully eyed the King.

This King has little pathos in his character. Whatever one's political or religious opinions may be, one feels a touch of sadness at the tragedy of men like Richard II or Charles I, but one feels only relief when James runs from the throne. In his charming memoirs, de Grammont draws for Hamilton so exquisite a portrait of the young James that every time he struts into Charles's merry court one smiles with amused anticipation as one smiles in the theatre when a solemn hobbler-dehoy attempts to ape the gay antics of his superiors. Even James's mistress, tall, coarse-mouthed Catherine Sedley, was out-of-place—save for her tongue—in Charles's court, and none could understand how so exceptionally plain a woman could hook the Duke of York; that was until she fell off her horse, when her complaisant skirts flew up to reveal charms enough to wipe away all mystification.

Charles II was undoubtedly a Roman Catholic, but he never offended the religion of his people; superbly tolerant, he could worship his faith in secret and, in public, fold his hands and uplift his eyes reverently in a Protestant church. To call such an attitude hypocrisy is absurd, it is merely tolerance; the wisdom of a man who wishes to save not only himself but also England from further trouble; and James quickly proved how sane his brother's attitude had been. Anthony Wood—evidently on the authority of the Roman Catholic, Ralph Sheldon informs us that "the oil or ointment

wherewith King Charles II was anointed at the coronation was sent for from France, where 'twas by a Popish bishop consecrated'; James was not satisfied with small compromises of this kind. He was going to declare his faith openly, although thereby he eventually lost his throne, and he must have realised the danger. So fierce was his orthodoxy, so determined was he not to flinch from any gesture, that apparently he underwent an earlier unofficial coronation, being "first anointed and crowned in private by a Catholic bishop with the same holy oil of Rheims that the Kings of France use, Lewis the Great having sent some over at the King's request." If James had been satisfied with this, all would have been well, but he was prepared to offend the nation rather than to compromise his conscience.

ONE really cannot blame James for cancelling the state ride through London. The Commonwealth had broken up and sold the regalia, and while new emblems had been made for Charles II, there had naturally been no preparation for the crowning of a Queen. James had to pay for Mary's regalia, and he was certainly not mean about this. In later years, during her exile, Mary could boast pathetic-ally, "My dress and royal mantle were covered with precious stones, and it took all the jewels that all the goldsmiths of London could procure to decorate my crown; of all these, nothing was lost [during the flight] except one small diamond, worth about forty shillings." And on another occasion she remarked with pride "that no

coronation of any preceding King of England had been so well conducted, and that all the arrangements had been made under the special superintendence of King James, who ordered a book to be made of it." Although we might very well doubt the beginning of this statement, we should feel grateful for that book, which still exists. It was written by Sandford, and a very beautiful book indeed it is, with lavish and fine illustrations; in it you will find a charming sketch of Mary with her pale face held in low-falling hair that ruffles out into a tangle of ringlets sliding to her shoulders. She might boast of her gems, but there was cause for boasting; an observer tells us that "the jewels she had on were reckoned worth a million, which made her shine like an angel."

On St. George's Day, Thursday, April 23, Mary was dressed in royal robes of purple velvet furled with ermine, looped with ropes and tassels of pearls, her full bellied skirt milkily glowing with a huge web of pearls over the heavy white and rustling silver brocade, her stiff stomacher glistening with gems, a cap of purple velvet trimmed with ermine on her dark hair—the cap already described and which can still be seen in the Tower—and was taken in her chair from St. James's Palace to Whitehall, and from there to Westminster Hall.

Her procession—as is customary—preceded the Kings, and as she walked beneath the canopy of the Barons of the Cinque Ports towards the Abbey, herb-strewers with baskets so gigantic that two benches had to support one basket threw flowers

in her path. You will see them in Sandford—delightful hooded girls with low-cut bodices and openskirts revealing rich petticoats; long gloves conceal their arms, and deep ruffles cascade from elbows to wrists. Two bushels of flowers and sweet-smelling herbs went to a basket, and there were nine baskets; the path from the hall—through New Palace Yard, King Street, and the Great Sanctuary—to the west door of the Abbey must have smelt like Cythera when the royal procession passed; warm sap of flowers bleeding into the blue cloth between the wooden railings behind which the mob pressed against the armed guards. Mary's gold-embroidered slippers killed many a blossom that spring morning; she would almost have waded through little coloured bells and gay petals: violets sinking into the blushing faces of primroses, pansies with their tiny black beard-like startled faces jumbled on cowslips, bluebells on yellow jonquils, all mingling with rich-smelling herbs . . . a carpet for Mary, but surely not for James who followed her?

"Vivat REGINA MARIA!" cried the forty Westminster scholars as Mary entered and walked up the quire steps to the altar; "Vivat Rex Jacobus!" they yelled as James followed.

Elvelyn watched James with a critical eye and a sad heart. He thought it all "magnificent," but he could not help sighing that "having been present at the late King's coronation, I was not ambitious of seeing this ceremony; to the sorrow of the people no sacrament, as ought to have been." It was there that James blundered. He would not

## JAMES II

communicate, although the precedent of the wretched King John might have deterred him from this act of folly. Mary had far more sense. A shrewd watcher tells us that "I observed a vast difference between the King's behaviour and the Queen's. At the reading of the litany they both came to kneel before the altar and she answered all the responses, but he never moved his lips. She expressed great devotion, but he little or none, often looking about as unconcerned. When she was anointed and crowned I never saw greater devotion on any countenance: the motion of her body and hands was very becoming, and she answered 'Amen' to every prayer with much humility. There was not the least sign of pleasure or transport, but all seriousness and composure of spirits."

"There were other omens to trouble the watchers. We have seen how, during the banquet afterwards, the King's Champion tumbled to the floor to Mary's horror; and now in fear she watched the crowning. "There was a presage that struck us," she said in later years, "and every one who observed it. They could not make the crown keep firm on the King's head; it appeared always on the point of falling, and it required some care to hold it steady." The man who steadied it was Henry Sydney who remarked with a boastful lie, "This is not the first time, your Majesty, that my family has supported the crown."

The reason for this unsteadiness of the crown is simple enough, whatever the superstitious may care to believe. James was using Charles's regalia,

They entered the Abbey singing, O Lord, grant the King a long life, and later sang seven anthems: I was glad when they said unto me; Let thy hand be strengthened; Come, Holy Ghost (the Veni Creator Spiritus); Zadok the Priest (Behold, O Lord our De-

Hail to the quire doors in the church.”  
 burning perfumes all the way from Westminster Hall to the quire doors in the church.”  
 scarlet robe, with a perfumery pan in his hand, must not forget “the Groom of the Vestry, in a the other players thronged the Abbey. And we nightingale clinging to a sprig; in scarlet mantles, coat with a badge on his left breast of a silver-gilt youngest first;” the organist wearing a short red surplices “with music books in their hands, the with mantles of scarlet, the Westminster quire in Majesty’s Chapel Royal in their surplices covered made. There were twelve children—boys—of His to many of us even more than the sweet noises they musicians’ costumes probably would have appealed there would not have been so much shouting. The tion would have overjoyed Pepys, particularly as James liked music, and the music at his coronation would have overjoyed Pepys, particularly as James liked music, and the music at his coronation her than of her husband.

I ALWAYS consider this the coronation of Mary of Modena rather than of King James II, although she was merely a consort; but her calm dignity shines in such contrast beside his stubborn attitude that it is perhaps charitable to remember more of her than of her husband.  
 to have had it altered previously.  
 and it was extremely careless of the officials not crown was both too wide and too low to fit James, and their heads were not of the same size. The

CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND



*foster; The King shall rejoice; God spare sometimes in  
 times; and My heart is inditing of a good matter.* The  
 first and last of these were written by the great  
 Purcell.

Omens are quickly found after the event, and there were enough at James's coronation to delight even a modern newspaper. Some very pretty ones were dug up over Edward VIII's abdication. It was alleged, amongst many other tales, that the cross had toppled from King George V's crown during his funeral; that nearly all the reigns of English Edwards fade out dismally—blantly ignoring Edward I, Edward III, Edward IV, and Edward VI—that the eldest sons of new dynasties have always suffered, usually dying before the father; while the Archbishop of Canterbury joyously pounced on the coincidence that the date of Edward VIII's abdication was the same as that of James II's. He also uttered the word "fled," but Edward left England with far more dignity than the Archbishop used when he spoke into the microphone after his late King's silent departing figure.

James, however, fled without any question. The seeds that grew into the revolt that sent him scampering abroad were not personal as was the love that made Edward sail from England. They were sown during his coronation—the threat to the religious liberties of England.

1689

The day of Thursday, April 11, was a tragic day; this was an ill-omened coronation if ever there was one. The very date chosen was without precedent, for it was neither a Sunday nor a Holy Day, which until then had been the rule; but William-and-Mary's was definitely a Protestant succession. England had had enough of Roman Catholicism under Charles I and James II—two disastrous reigns—and parliament was determined that every future King and Queen must be orthodox. Even the coronation oath was altered. Evelyn had noticed dangers in the previous oath, the loopholes given to a slippery King like James II. He had pointed these out to Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, saying that in the oath "there is not once the least mention of the reformed or protestant religion, but only of the church of England as by law established, which church the papists tell us is the church of Rome." The oath for William and Mary was newly drafted. The question was asked in this fashion: "Will ye to the utmost of your power maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel and the protestant religion established by law, and will ye preserve to the bishops and clergy of this realm and the church

committed to their charge, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?" To which William and Mary dutifully answered with one voice, "All this I promise to do."

Her father cursed Mary. He landed in Ireland, and a letter from him apparently reached her just as she had finished her coronation toilet in White-hall. He wrote, "that hitherto he had made all fatherly excuses for what had been done, and had wholly attributed her part in the revolution to obedience to her husband; but the act of being crowned was in her power, and if she were crowned while he and the Prince of Wales were living, the curse of an outraged father would light upon her, as well as of that God who has commanded duty to parents." The effect of this furious epistle showed more on William than on Mary. He became extremely agitated, tried to vindicate himself, and even, in a most unchivalrous fashion, blamed his accession on his wife, swearing "that he had done nothing but by her advice and with her approbation." Ambition was evidently strong in the new Queen, stronger far than filial love. She sat in her coronation robes, glaring at her husband, more angry than hurt, and cried: "that if her father regained his authority, her husband might thank himself for letting him go as he did." When Jane, II heard these words—for naturally they were quickly repeated to him—he wailed "that his daughter wished some cruelty or other to be perpetrated against him." (One cannot help feeling pity for James at this moment. He was never to forget his daughter's treachery in the tragic, lonely

years that followed. "It was the more grievous," he wrote later, "because the hand which gave the blow was most dear to him. Yet Providence," he adds with small self-satisfaction, "gave her some share of disquiet too; for this news [his landing in Ireland], coming just at their coronation, put a damp on those joys which had left no room in her heart for the remembrance of a fond and loving father. Like another, Tullia, under the show of sacrificing all to her country's liberty, she truly sacrificed her honour, her duty, and even religion, to drive out a peaceful Tullius, and set up another Tarkin in his place." Which, despite the rather involved simile, does show that James was hurt—hurt to the heart, until his death.

And he was not the only one horrified by Mary's coronation. Sancroft, the Archbishop, refused to officiate, and the Bishop of London was induced to take his place. A troop of Dutch soldiers, to the people's fury, guarded the way to the Abbey. Courtiers whispered together, watching the cloud from Ireland, uncertain of the future. Anne, Mary's sister, heir-presumptive, was mainly troubled about her newly born brother, anxiously asking if he were truly legitimate. Her hopes were quickly strangled. "He is, madam," she was told by Mrs. Dawson, "as surely your brother, the son of King James, and of his Queen, as you are the daughter of the late Duchess of York; and I speak what I know, for I was the first person who received ye both in my arms." So great was the uproar in the Palace caused by James's letter and the tidings of his invasion that the ceremony, due

to start at eleven in the morning, did not actually begin until half-past one.

Every one in the Abbey noted that the sparse gathering proved the uneasy state of the country, for, says he: "Much of the splendour was abated by the absence of divers who should have contributed to it, there being but five bishops, four judges (no more being yet sworn), and several noblemen and great ladies wanting." Jacobites noticed that when the royal couple entered they looked far from miserable; in fact, although William was cheerful enough, his Queen seemed even gay, lowering at his side, her height accentuated by the fact that, for some reason, he was stooping badly.

Then came another omen. When it was time for the offering, both King and Queen discovered to their horror that they had either lost or forgotten the money: here was the envelope, but it was quite empty. The gold basin was placed before them, but they could only blush and stare blankly at it until, after a seemingly endless pause, Lord Dumbly plucked out his purse and counted twenty guineas which he gave the King. The Bible was offered William and Mary to kiss, and kiss it they did; this Bible is now in the Hague, and written on the title-page in Mary's own hand are these words: "The book was given the King and I at our coronation. Marie, R."

After a half-hour's sermon that threw real churchlike thunderbolts at the absent James, the oath was taken in the revised form. As Mary and William did everything together, speaking together,

kissing the book together, kneeling together, and so on, they had also to carry the sword together, and this sight—even if not an omen—must have gladdened the eyes of all good Jacobites, for Mary being very tall and William being rather short, they had to bob along with it.

There was also a certain trouble over the rings. Mary tells us, when describing her ring, "This ruby was given me by the prince three days after we were married which being the first thing he gave me I have ever had a particular esteem for it. When I was to be crowned I had it made big enough for ye finger for ye occasion, but by mistake it was put on ye King's finger and I had to put on [this]. Mine was designed for him, but we changed and I have worn it ever since till last Thursday ye 17/7 of Nov. 1689 ye stone dropped out at dinner. I was extremely troubled at it upon the account forementioned, therefore having found it locked it up for fear of ye like misfortune chance again." Mary being so much bigger than William, I wonder if they had to struggle getting on their rings.

So late had the coronation started that it grew dark in the Abbey, and Mary naturally grew tired. Said sister Anne, "Madam, I pity your fatigue," and sharply answered sister Mary, "A crown, sister, is not so heavy as it seems."

ANOTHER bad omen to a reign that continued quietly unto death: there was some trouble about the royal Champion in the ensuing banquet. "When the time arrived," we are told by an

eye-witness, "for the entrance of the Champion, minute passed after minute. At last two hours wore away; the pause in the high ceremonial began to be alarming. Sir Charles Dymock at last made his entrance in the dusk, almost in the dark; he was the son of James II's Champion; he made his challenge in the name of our sovereign lord and lady, William and Mary. I heard the sound of his gauntlet when he flung it on the ground, but as the light in Westminster Hall had utterly failed, no person could distinguish what was done."

Perhaps this darkness gave birth to a most peculiar legend. It was said that an old woman on crutches bobbed out from somewhere—but from where?—picked up the glove, and with amazing agility bobbed back again, leaving in place of the steel gauntlet a lady's little glove containing an appointment for next day in Hyde Park. There is no mention of this appointment being kept, although rumour added to the sinister bobbly figure of an old lady on crutches, the shadow of a soldierlike gentleman striding amongst the trees of Hyde Park from two to four o'clock the following day.

WILLIAM III AND MARY II

She was carried over the flowers strewn by the herb-girls from the Hall to the Abbey, preceded by the usual gathering. She had, however, insisted upon two fresh heralds who have never appeared since—the heralds of Normandy and Aquitaine, dukedoms over which the crown of England had long since lost all right. The gentlemen who put on tabards for this occasion were, in fact, two gentlemen of the privy-chamber with the uninspiring names of James Clark and Jonathan Anne's ceremony.

Otherwise there is nothing extraordinary in self-effacing George himself preferred it. although it seems more than probable that amiable peer. Why this should have been remains a mystery, subjects and swore homage to her like any other wife; he participated only as one of the Queen's George of Denmark, was not crowned with his point about this ceremony. The Prince Consort, Abbey in an open chair. There is another unique her to stand upright. She had to be carried to the years of age, she had gout, and it was difficult for his or her coronation. Although only thirty-seven who has been infirm in any way at the time of Of all our sovereigns, Queen Anne is the only one

1702

*Queen Anne*

XXXVIII



Andrews. There was a far more inspiring name than theirs in the procession, that of a girl of thirteen, one who upheld the Queen's train—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

George of Denmark walked immediately ahead of his wife.

Even though she was, scarcely able to stand, Anne insisted upon attending the banquet afterwards in Westminster Hall, most probably to refute any rumours that she was afraid to face the Champion after the unfortunate affair at William-and-Mary's. George sat at her table, "at the end thereof, at her Majesty's left hand." The whole of banquet for all, including thieves. The whole of the plate was stolen, together with most of the pewter and linen.

After feasting, the company retired to St. James's Palace where George scolded himself down to a glorious evening amongst his cronies and the contents of a huge cellar. But the Queen was tired; her feet were paining her. The Lord Chamberlain, noting this, hinted that George might propose going to bed. "I propose!" cried George waggishly. "I cannot. I am her Majesty's subject, have done and sworn homage to her to-day. I shall do naught but what she commands me!"

"Then," laughed Anne, "as that is the case, and I am very tired. I do command you, George, to come to bed."

And like a good subject, George went to bed.

His coronation on Wednesday, October 20, was so overshadowed by the excitement of George's landing in England and drive through London that it scarcely seems to exist. There was very little interest shown at the crowning, but to view the "Ceremonial for the Reception of his most sacred Majesty George, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, etc., upon his arrival from Holland to his Kingdom of Great Britain," citizens paid as high as from twenty to thirty guineas. Perhaps this, however, was not so much to look at the King as at the procession of great lords, of buff-coated soldiers, of city-trumpeters, of "the city banner borne by the Water-bailiff on horseback, with a servant on foot in a coloured livery," of "the King's banner borne by the Common Hunt on horseback, with a servant on foot in coloured livery," and so on and on until, after the prince had bobbed by in his coach, followed by "the Lord Mayor of London in his crimson velvet gown on horseback, wearing his rich collar and jewel, uncovered, bearing the city-sword by his Majesty's permission, with only four servants of foot, bare-headed, in coloured liveries," the King himself, jolted by red-faced under his powdered wig,

1714

*George the First*

XXIX

Alas! after all this excitement of the first George's landing and entry into London, when we reach the coronation we find practically nothing what-ever to discuss. There *was* a coronation, and that is about all that can be said. George could not speak English, his courtiers could not talk German; it was a most dull coronation, one of the dullest, excluding perhaps George II's and William IV's.

Burton, far advanced in pregnancy," wounded nineteen enthusiasts, including "Lady --shuddered, burst, and collapsed, and killed and Old Palace Yard, the other in the Board Sanctuary procession, two over-stuffed scabbings—one in from Westminster Hall, and, during the snail-like the precedent set at Anne's coronation, was stolen *Floral Citius*. All plate and table-linen, following fire-spitting dragons with a crown and the motto, (churchyard, fireworks that shot up two bounding singing children, and, at night, in St. Paul's Conduits ran with wine, there were pagans of people through the mob of yeomen-of-the-guard, bowing and bowing and, perhaps, smiling at the

Like his father's, there is practically nothing to say of George II's coronation, except that he was crowned in the Abbey with his consort Queen Caroline, on Wednesday, October 11. Ah, yes! there is one detail well worth mentioning. Exactly a month before, Handel produced his four coronation anthems, one or two of which have been performed at every succeeding coronation, no matter how at the time the *beaux monde* of London sniggered at his queer German noises. George II had taste enough to appreciate his fellow-countryman, and he had him appointed Composer to the Court and Composer to the Chapel Royal with good fees on certain occasions, and an additional salary of six hundred a year—bounty from Queen Caroline, and fees for teaching music to the little princesses. Handel was to ruin himself trying to mend the taste of England, but such has been the fate of far too many great artists. The anthems he wrote for George II's coronation were *Let thy hand be strengthened; My heart is inditing; The King shall rejoice; and the justifiably famous, Zadok the Priest*. During the coronation, these were sung to "an accompaniment of instrumental music of every sort."

1727

*George the Second*

XXX

## GEORGE II

For this reason, George II's coronation must not be passed over. Otherwise it was a rather muddled affair, and, owing to a quarrel with dean and chapter, the *Ten Creator* was omitted by accident. The Queen used jewels mainly borrowed from court-ladies or hired from shops; the result was, to say the very least, a failure. "The appearance of her finery," an eye-witness tells us, "was a mixture of magnificence and meanness." That phrase, perhaps, might be used to sum up the whole coronation.

On the anniversary of the battle of Agincourt, Tuesday, September 22, King George III was crowned in the Abbey with his new bride, Charlotte, a very thin, pale little lady with broad mouth and nostrils and pretty dusky hair. There had been little interest in the coronations of his father and grandfather, but there was apparently great interest in his, and Horace Walpole was astounded at the prices for seats and stands. His mother, he tells us, had paid a bare forty guineas for two rooms and a scaffold to witness George II's crowning, but to witness George III's three hundred and fifty guineas were asked for the same space! Not only were galleries built inside the Abbey, but also outside from which could be seen the procession across the blue railed-in carpet. William Hickey, one of the most delightfully shameless of autobiographers, was, to our great joy and comfort, present at this coronation. He must have had an extraordinary memory, for he was only thirteen at the time, yet he recollected the most minute and amusing episodes.

His father paid fifty guineas for one of the rooms on the scaffolding inside the Abbey, and, Hickey tells us, these rooms were for some reason called

1760

*George the Third*

XXXI

Lastly, the weather was excellent, for people kept all night in the streets and were jammed against the soldiers guarding the way to the

cathedral. Their number, and a hot meal was quickly the Hickey family and guests managed to reach ladies, was at times truly terrific." At last, however, accompanied by the screams of the terrified demolished without number, the noise of which, each other, whereby glasses and panels were This created much confusion and running against to the abbey, and getting into the wrong ranks. men, some of whom were going to the hall, others difficulties increased, from mistakes of the coach- inch. As we approached near the Abbey, the exactly an hour without moving onward a single effect. Opposite the Horse Guards we were stopped made a blaze of light equal to day, and had a line carriages, with servants behind carrying lanterns, by the grandeur of the scene, such a multitude of was consequently tedious, yet the time was beguiled of carriages, nearly filling the street, our progress and that "at the end of Pall Mall the different lines in three carriages to reach the Abbey, only to young William, and they all started at midnight party consisted of exactly this number, including with ease holding a dozen persons." His father's separate entrance with lock and key to the door, divided off by wooden partitions, each having a of the building. Upon this occasion they were command an admirable view of the whole interior the great columns that support the roof, and "numerics"; they were "situated at the head of

Abbey. Here there was a brawl between soldiers and sailors, for the sailors insisted on climbing up into the soldiers' platform; and the mob could only be kept in even a semblance of order by being hit violently over the head, although a tip could get you permission to crawl past the railings on to the blue cloth.

For the first time since Henry VII's coronation, a Queen Mother was present: the Princess Augusta with all her children walked first to the Abbey; "her train, which was of silk was but short, and therefore not borne by any person, her hair flowed down her shoulders in hanging curls," escaping from a circlet of diamonds. Then came the solemn procession treading across the flower-swept carpet. Last of all walked three Eastern ambassadors in Turkish dress.

At about half-past one, the King and Queen entered the Abbey, watched by two sharp observers: by the indolent, charming Horace Walpole, who derived enormous secret amusement from the solemn behaviour of various acquaintances, and by young William Hickey gaping down from his father's nursery from which stance, fortunately for us, he "had a capital view of the whole ceremony. Their Majesties," he continues "(the King having previously married), being crowned, the Archbishop of Canterbury mounted the pulpit to deliver the sermon, and as many thousands were out of the possibility of hearing a single syllable, they took that opportunity to eat their meal when the general clattering of knives, forks, plates, and glasses that ensued, produced a most



ridiculous effect, and a universal burst of laughter followed."

We have already mentioned the strange episode of the sword that disappeared only to reappear on the altar; there was also another vexed question before holy communion. The King stood in perplexity: should he remove his crown while he communicated? It was a dilemma that the Archbishop could not resolve; so the Archbishop asked the Bishop of Rochester who could only shake his head in reply. "The King determined within himself that humility best became such a solemn act of devotion, took off his crown and laid it down during the administration." Old Lady Montagu was overjoyed at this. "How happy," she writes, "in the day of greatest worldly pomp he should remember his duty to the King of Kings!" Poor Queen Charlotte's situation was most embarrassing because she discovered that her crown was fixed amongst her hair and wouldn't come free despite her tugs. George, always a kindly man, told her she must not worry because it would be looked on as a part of her regal attire and not as a mark of greatness in one humbling herself in God's presence. The King's behaviour during the ceremony was irreproachable, but the other participants bungled things a little, for "there were such long pauses between some of the ceremonies as plainly showed all the actors were not perfect in their parts." But a prebendary bursts into tragedy as he recalls George's performance, "particularly in manner of a censing and reading him off on

his throne after his coronation. No actor in the character of Pyrrhus in the *Distrest Mother*, not even Booth himself, who was celebrated for it in the *Spectator*, ever ascended the throne with so much grace and dignity."

The music of the coronation was excellent, the service beginning with Purcell's lovely anthem, *I was glad when they said unto me, followed by The King shall rejoice in his strength*. Handel's *Zadok the Priest* was also sung, and *The King shall rejoice*.

WILLIAM HICKEY's father, unexpectedly receiving two tickets for Westminster Hall, gave them to his son and a friend, Mr. Thomas. They raced out and, after great difficulty, squeezed their way into the gallery of the Hall; but William was too tiny to see anything "until some gentlemen kindly made way to let me forward, and then some ladies, who were in a part that was railed off, seeing a fine-looking boy (which at that time I was) in distress, they with the utmost good humour let me in, making room in the front row. Thus I found myself in the very best place in the Hall and within a few yards of their Majesties."

The banquet was an utter muddle. There were no chairs-of-state for the King and Queen, and none at all for London's Lord Mayor and aldermen and the Barons of the Cinque Ports who began to bully the unfortunate Lord Steward. But the Lord Steward had troubles enough of his own. He had taken great pains to teach his horse to behave in the correct manner before royalty—that is, to walk backwards from the presence. The animal

took its lessons so deeply to heart that, in excess of zeal, it walked in backwards, tail towards the Majestics.

The Champion's horse was better behaved, and the challenge was hung unanswered in the usual triumphant manner.

Shortly after the ceremony, a strange tale was whispered in the gallery. It was said that the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, had sat and watched the whole proceedings, and had even listened to the Champion's challenge, until a friend recognised him and warned him to leave. Charles answered that "curiosity" had drawn him there, and added, "But I assure you that the person who is the object of all this pomp and magnificence is the person I envy the least."

The story is doubtful, but not impossible. Charles in earlier times had secretly entered London, but at this period he was not the brave man he had been: hard drinking had weakened his will.

He might have been in Westminster Hall that day, but without any evidence beyond romantic rumour, the story cannot be accepted.

<sup>1</sup> In the *London News Chronicle* (21/12/36) a letter from B. W. Gardner, M.P., stated that the writer was told by a German secondary schoolboy: "We know your history. It begins with Cromwell, who was a dictator and the founder of your colonial empire." Mr. Gardner asks, "Could any teaching be more sententious and insidious?" One might add, "Or so inaccurate." Cromwell was no dictator in the fascist sense, he was the opposite: a tolerant brave man who failed because of his very tolerance, by trying patiently to balance the extremes of opposing forces—the communist, the Puritan, and the Royalist. Charles was the true fascist, attempting to tax the people without the sanction of parliament and acting in the dictator's fashion—for his personal gratification with no thought of the country.

WHEN we look back on the latter half of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, the feeling inevitably comes that we are watching a pageant. Other ages do not affect us in exactly the same way. The pageantry of the Middle Ages, for example, was merely an outward show—the splendour of costumes and of ice-like slabs of plate armour. There was nothing of the actor in the people themselves. They were very extrovert, living mightily for vital purposes. It was the same with the Tudors, that splendid era of tremendous poetry and brave men; and with the Stuarts, the people groping solidly towards political thought that became concentrated in the great figure of Cromwell;<sup>1</sup> and with the earlier parts

1820

*George the Fourth*

XXXII

copy  
of a picture  
of CORONADO





of the eighteenth century when life was seized in gargantuan proportions by Hogarth and Fielding. The break perhaps is shown in the writings of men like Sterne and Richardson; the dynamic fury of Swift, the subtle poison of Pope, became watered into sentiment, into the striking of pretty attitudes entirely devoid of life. I have often been amazed by those critics, such even as Austin Dobson, who blandly tell us that Richardson knew the intricacies of the female heart while Fielding's genius was confined purely to a knowledge of men. I have met most of Fielding's women - his passionate, full-hearted Molly Seagrim, his too-human generous Mr. Mathews, his bawdy Mrs. Ellison, and even his frightened Sophia; but never in all my amblings have I come across such weepy, shifty creatures as Pamela and Clarissa. They are the ideal and the preposterous. The fantasy of Sterne is saved by his Kabalaïstan genius for characterization and his inspired irrelevancy, but Richardson's people remain carved from sugar and stuck in treacle. The latter half of the eighteenth century was dominated by such fantasies, and gradually life took on the form of a never really serious play; men no longer told the truth - unless they were almost incredible monsters like the heroic Dr. John on the smiling Gibbon - they became the creatures of attitude: men of feeling and women of heart. Because the people of those times were actors and were conscious of being actors, it is inevitable that we should look upon this period as a mere emotional play got up purely for our entertainment. The people themselves looked upon

each other in that light, as is clearly seen in George III's coronation when they chattered and cutlery clattered to the sermon of the Archbishop of Canterbury. One cannot call this irreverence, the play had merely failed to interest a rather bored and very critical audience.

The scandalous drama, therefore, of George IV's coronation really does not touch us. No matter how the actors might have felt their personal sufferings, each was aware of the pageant, and when the main performer failed to take her cue, the audience that had begun by applauding ended by hissing her.

To understand the situation we must go back some years, to the time when George IV was Prince of Wales, the First Gentleman of Europe, of whom it was written with some exaggeration:

*A noble, nasty course he ran  
superbly filthy and fastidious;  
he was the world's first gentleman  
and made the appellation hideous.*

GEORGE, a true Prince Charming, had rarely been deprived of anything except physical beauty, and that, too, it seems he had in extreme youth before he grew so fat that even stays could not give him a passable figure. His mistresses were usually of an elderly type and preferably married ladies or widows. Then he met the beautiful Mrs. Mary Anne—she liked to call herself Maria—Fitzherbert, and discovered to his amazement that here was a woman who didn't totter before him, blinded by his magnificence. Like a spoiled child



## GEORGE IV.

deprived of a sugar-plum, he sat on the floor and howled and was even known to bite the legs of chairs and tables in lieu of Mrs. Fitzherbert; he also staged a suicide that was almost convincing, and would have been entirely convincing if he hadn't been too afraid of hurting himself. But Mr. Fitzherbert remained obdurate, if terrified. She was a very strong Roman Catholic and would not surrender to Prince charming without being married. George dared not marry her. The 1666 Act of Settlement entailed the forfeiture of succession to any person of royal blood who married a Roman Catholic; and then George III, hearing the scandal, passed the Royal Marriage Act of 1772 which decreed illegal any marriage that had not the king's consent. Prince George wanted and parliament as his debts were enormous and—the throne, and he dared not offend his father Fitzherbert. All the same, his passion was strong enough for him to marry Mrs. Fitzherbert secretly on December 15, 1785. The marriage lasted happily for a while, but George was cajoled from connubial bliss by the elderly charms of various ladies, and he had openly to deny his marriage when the rumour entered parliament. Then the king insisted that he marry Princess Caroline of Brunswick. George could not wriggle out of this, so huge were his debts, and the only consolation he could find was to insult his royal wife the moment he saw her, by shouting, "I am not well, pray get me a glass of brandy." When it was suggested that a glass of water might be more appropriate, he

In 1814, Caroline left England for Italy, but she hurried back on the death of George III. The Prince, now King George IV, was as vindictive as ever. He commanded that no prayer for his wife as

were smashed. insulted in the streets; the windows of his carriage were behind Caroline, and George was hissed and visiting her child was retained. But the people wanted them to vote, and the ban on the Princess the committee—all except two—voted as George illegitimate child charge. Being privy councillors, letter and all the papers relating to the disproved twenty-three privy councillors to investigate the publicity, the Prince appointed a committee of the *Morning Chronicle*. Unable to slip aside from this and, receiving no answer, published her letter in once a fortnight. Caroline wrote pleadingly to him, hibited her from seeing her daughter more than George took swift revenge on Caroline; he pro- and his son became Prince Regent, the young George III entered that terrible phase of lunacy, away from her as the Prince desired. Then when refused to let his son take Caroline's daughter conclusively disproved, and the King therefore having an illegitimate child, but this lie was separated. Later, George charged Caroline with child, the Princess Charlotte, they were formally ably until, shortly after the birth of their only untate, unattractive girl and treated her abomin- his official wife to the end. He loathed the unfor- Forced into this marriage, George resented for his mother.

cried, "No! by God!" and fled the room, calling

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Queen should appear in the Prayer Book. Then he started proceedings against her on the charge of adultery in Italy. Undermined by this threat, Caroline arrived in England on June 7; and on the day of her entry into London, both houses of parliament were recommended to examine the evidence of adultery. When, after three readings, the bill attained only a majority of nine, the government dropped it; and Caroline was again vindicated.

This was the situation on the day of the coronation, Thursday, July 19.

Not only the Queen but the whole of London was keyed up for scenes at the Abbey, for Caroline had firmly announced her decision to be present, no matter what George might say. The London mob, eager for a spree, backed her with all its voice. Outside her house in South Audley Street, the crowd was terrific from early in the morning; some who climbed the wall saw her coach in the yard and yelled information to those below. "The bores are so. . . Everything's quite ready. . . The Queen's entered her coach. . . " Then, shortly after five o'clock, the great gates were thrown open, and out jolted the Queen in her state-coach drawn by six bays. "The Queen!" shouted the jubilation mob. "the Queen!" She bowed with true dignity from side to side as the soldiers loyally preceded her. Amidst cheers, and followed by a retinue of men, she drove to the Dean's Yard gate only to find that she had arrived at the wrong entrance. She was directed toward the Portico. Coated down

The coachman whipped his horses alongside the platform to New Palace Yard only to come to a dead end; he eventually stopped outside Westminster Hall Gate. The Queen's companion, Lord Hood, alighted and, finding a door, helped the Queen out of the coach. They were refused permission to enter: the doorkeeper explained that he was not allowed to pass any one without a peer's ticket, and it was really extraordinary—as Sir Walter Scott noted—that Caroline had neglected to take this small precaution. "Did you ever hear of a Queen being asked for a ticket before?" cried Hood: "this is your Queen!" But Queen or no Queen, the fellow would not let her pass, no matter how Hood tried to bully him. No, he said, no one could get in without a ticket. "I have a ticket," said Hood, and with sudden inspiration, he gave it to Caroline. It was at this moment that the Queen's courage melted. With a friend at her side, she could have entered, but alone. . . . She turned away, cut by the ladies of fashion sniffing and whirling aside their skirts as she passed. The mob, a moment since her Champion, now howled insults after her carriage.

So Caroline swept from the scene, and not only from this scene, but from life itself. She died less than three weeks afterwards. "It leaves an infernal lump in the throat," said Mr. Creevey when he heard.

But as Caroline fought at the door, the King was busy with the coronation. This was one of the most expensive ceremonies on record, and its costs

were further complicated by the King's forgetting to return many of the jewels he had borrowed.

A young lady visitor tells us: "When we first entered the nave through the cloisters, at a little past three in the morning, it was full of soldiers, guards, who were bivouacking on the floor. We saw them stretched on the platform through the daisy light. Their sleep was soon disturbed by their officers, who from time to time roused them and made them go through some evolutions, shouldering and grounding their arms, etc. These guards, who lined the nave during the whole ceremony, were so well chosen that not only the line of their heads, all about six feet from the ground, but their shoulders and knees all were on a precise level. The bustle of officers, and even ladies walking through the nave, of brushing the bright purple cloth which covered the platform, both within and without the Abbey, and the hurry of preparations went on with intervals of military music and many false alarms till near 11 o'clock, when the procession was announced. . . . It was preceded by seven herb-women bearing large baskets and strewing shreds of flowers plentifully over the purple cloth. This was a very pretty sight; they were the only women in the whole ceremony. . . ."

But now a stronger pen must take the place of the young lady visitor's. There sat that morning in the Abbey a man of such greatness that there was not one other present with whom he can be compared—not the King nor even the Duke of Wellington. Sir Walter Scott. To amount to

paraphrase his careful description would be in-  
solence beyond my committing; I can only quote  
verbatim and edit as judiciously as possible.

"The effect of the scene in the Abbey,"  
Scott wrote to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, "was  
beyond measure magnificent. Imagine long galleries  
stretched among the aisles of that venerable and  
august pile—those which rise above the altar  
pealing back their echoes to a full and magnificent  
quire of music—those which occupied the sides  
filled even to crowding with all that Britain has of  
beautiful and distinguished—and the cross-gallery  
most appropriately occupied by the Westminster  
schoolboys, in their white surplices. . . . Imagine  
this, I say, and then add the spectacle upon the  
floor—the altar surrounded by the fathers of the  
church—the King encircled by the nobility of the  
land and the councillors of his throne, and by  
warriors wearing the honoured marks of dis-  
tinction bought by many a glorious danger; add  
to this the rich spectacle of the aisles crowded with  
waving plumage, and coronets, and caps of  
honour, and the sun, which brightened and  
saddened as if on purpose, now beaming in full  
lustre on the rich and varied assemblage, and  
now darting a solitary ray, which caught, as it  
passed, the glittering folds of a banner, or the  
edge of a group of battle-axes or partisans, and  
then rested full on some fair form, 'the cynosure  
of neighbouring eyes,' whose circle of diamonds  
glistened under its influence. . . . But there were  
better things to reward my pilgrimage than the  
mere pleasure of the eye and ear; for it was im-

possible, without the deepest veneration, to behold the voluntary and solemn interchange of vows, betwixt the King and his assembled people, whilst he, on the one hand, called God Almighty to witness his resolution to maintain their laws and privileges, whilst they called, at the same moment, on the divine being to bear witness that they accepted him for their liege sovereign, and pledged to him their love and duty. I cannot describe to you the effect produced by the solemn yet strange mixture of the words of scripture, with the shouts and acclamations of the assembled multitude as they answered to the voice of the prelate, who demanded of them whether they acknowledged as their monarch the prince who claimed the sovereignty in their presence. It was peculiarly delightful to see the King receive from the royal brethren, but in particular from the Duke of York, the fraternal kiss in which they acknowledged their sovereign. There was an honest tenderness, an affectionate and sincere reverence in the embrace interchanged betwixt the Duke of York and his Majesty, that approached almost to a caress, and impressed all present with the electrical conviction, that the nearest to the throne in blood was, the nearest also in affection. I never heard plaudits given more from the heart than those that were thundered upon the royal brethren when they were thus pressed to each other's bosom. It was an emotion of natural kindneſs, which, for the moment, thus pressed to each other's bosom. It was an emotion of natural kindneſs, which, for the moment, thus pressed to each other's bosom. It was an emotion of natural kindneſs, which, for the moment, thus pressed to each other's bosom.

ceremonial, even so much so as to excite some alarm among those who saw him as nearly as I did. He completely recovered himself, however, and bore (generally speaking) the fatigue of the day very well. I learn from one near his person, that he roused himself with great energy, even when most oppressed with heat and fatigue, when any of the more interesting parts of the ceremony were to be performed, or when anything occurred which excited his personal and immediate attention. . . ."

The young lady visitor was not quite so thrilled as loyal, romantic Sir Walter; her main interest was in the personal appearance of the men, each of whom she judged with a woman's shrewd eye. She would have horrified Sir Walter by describing the bearer of the golden spurs as "most haggard and his knees knocked together," while her comments on the King and his brothers would undoubtedly have struck Sir Walter into an apoplexy, for she remarks judiciously that Prince Leopold "looked a man one must respect and might adore, quite of another race to the thick, heavy, stupid-looking royal family who followed him. Of them the Duke of Gloucester is the handsomest, but he is foolish-looking; the Duke of Cambridge is the most good-looking, and the Duke of Sussex the biggest. The King followed, overloaded with finery, which produced no good effect; he preceded the canopy, which was of gold tissue and carried by the Barons of the Cinque Ports. His Majesty looked pretty well in health, but wonderfully like an immense old woman in person, with a wig with long flowing curls which hung full a quarter of a yard over his



shoulders. He wore a cap of maintenance in gold, and a crimson robe. In returning, the crown, the borrowed crown which belongs to Rundell and Bridger, was on his head, and his capture was in his hand, and his train of embroidered purple velvet. He looked then most wretchedly, fatigued and worn, and as pale as death—still he looked royal and gracious." The shouting as the royal family gave homage to their brother even inspired this petty treacherous miss, and she uses the same word as Sir Walter to describe the cheering; it was, she says, "electrifying."

Even Sir Walter, however, could pause amid his romantic ecstasy to make a few small criticisms, and mantes, after the fashion of Queen Elizabeth's time. Separately, so gay a garb had an odd effect on the persons of elderly or ill-made men; but when the whole was thrown into one general body all these discrepancies disappeared, and you no more observed the particular manner or appearance of an individual than you do that of a soldier in the battalion which marches past you. . . . The boy assigned to the foreign ambassadors preceded in a most brilliant effect, and was perfectly in a blaze with diamonds. When the sunshine lighted on Prince Esterhazy, in particular, he glimmered like a galaxy. . . . Beside the prince sat a jewelled daughter-in-law, I believe, who wore as many diamonds as if they had been Bristol stones. An honest Persian was also a remarkable figure, he in

the dogged and imperturbable gravity with which he looked on the whole scene, without ever moving a limb or a muscle during the space of four hours. Like Sir Willful Witwoud, I cannot find that your Persian is orthodox; for if he scorned everything else, there was a Mahometan paradise extended on his right hand along the seats which were occupied by the peeresses and their daughters, which the Prophet himself might have looked on with emotion. I have seldom seen so many elegant and beautiful girls as sat mingled among the noble matronage of the land; and the waving plumage of feathers, which made the universal head-dress, had the most appropriate effect in setting off their charms."

Like all his family, George IV was extremely musical, and it was by his order that the *Hallelujah* was sung at the ceremony. He also made a special point of commanding that the music should not crush the singing.

THE banquet afterwards affected our two commentators in entirely different ways, and both had criticisms to make. Sir Walter's antiquarian eye was sharply set on the Champion, and quickly noted that he carried the wrong shield—"a defensive weapon which it would have been impossible to use on horseback"; the Champion himself did not please Sir Walter greatly. He was, we learn, "a fine-looking youth, but bearing, perhaps, a little too much the appearance of a maiden-knight to be the challenger of the world in a King's behalf. He threw down the gauntlet,

however, with becoming manhood, and showed as much horsemanship as the crowd of knights and squires around him would permit to be exhibited. . . . On the whole, this striking part of the exhibition somewhat disappointed me."

It did not disappoint our young lady companion. She was enraptured, and her duenna, in particular "was delighted with the Champion, who—as well as his horse—acted admirably. The aldermen, who preceded the peers in the procession, no sooner saw the rich feast spread for them in the Hall than they sat down, and were not to be stopped from their dinner even by the king's entry. They positively had half eaten their dinner before the king came." From Sir Walter we learn that not only did these gluttonous aldermen eat too soon, but they ate the wrong dinner, guzzling the peers' venison and turtle while the peers had to remain satisfied with the aldermen's cold collation.

"The duties of service at the banquet," Sir Walter tell us, "and of attendance in general, was performed by pages dressed very elegantly in French square coats of scarlet, with gold lace, blue sashes, white silk hose, and white roses. There were also maitrains for keeping order, who wore a similar dress, but of blue, and having white sashes. Both departments were filled up almost entirely by young gentlemen, many of them of the very first condition, who took the essential character, to say nothing to the show. When I saw many of my young acquaintance thus attending upon their father and kinmen, the peers, nobles, and o-

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

forth, I could not help thinking of Crabbe's lines, with a little alteration:

*'Twas schooling pride to see the menial wait,  
smile on his father, and receive his plate.*

It must be owned, however, that they proved but indifferent valets, and were very apt, like the clown in the pantomime, to eat the cheer they should have handed to their masters, and to play other *tours de page*."

# XXXIII

## *William the Fourth*

1837

The coronation of King William IV and his consort Queen Adelaide on Thursday, September 3, was in pathetic contrast to that of his brother George IV. While George's was so magnificent that its cost is almost impossible to estimate, the interest on the borrowed jewels from Rundell, alone amounted to £10,000 - William's was a humble affair, its entire cost being only about £37,000. William cut down on everything, and made a great many lamentable alterations in the ceremony, some of which unfortunately still exist to this day. He omitted the word was not buckled on him, he omitted the ceremonial walk to the Abbey and the banquet afterwards, and he lost to us for ever the custom of the King being actually lifted on to the throne. William himself considered his coronation of a small importance that he wanted to drop the whole affair. He even consulted the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, on the question. Economy was, evidently, the reason for his desire, and also for his employing fewer men than usual; practically only members of the Royal Household officiated.

"The Queen," we are told, "was so anxious that no expense should be incurred on her account that she would not permit either the Duke or the

## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

the hire of a crown from Rundell's for herself, but ordered that it should be composed of her own jewels and made up at her own expense." Parsi-many even extended to the oblation: when the gold basin was put before William, he could only whisper hurriedly to the Archbishop, "I have not got anything; I will send it to you to-morrow." Altogether, a wretched, miserable affair, best passed over rapidly.

It is inevitable that we should always picture Queen Victoria as a dumpy old woman sitting like a little bear in a black gown, with almost boncles, tiny hands, mere dabs of flesh on the broad lap; with white hair drawn tightly from the forehead and parted in the centre under a small lace cap, with popping eyes, and a minute pursed-up wrinkling mouth. We have seen her thus, so often in drawing-rooms, in public-house parlours, in the gaudy colours of decaying lithographs, in the oft tones of tin-types; always the fat little woman, unsmiling, lubby, and complacent. We must drive that picture from our minds and try to see her as she looked to her contemporaries when she was crowned on Tuesday, June 28. She was not really beautiful, but she was charming, with the intense enthusiasm of youth, the vigour and determined action by to undergo her duties as her ministers might demand. She had been treated anxiously for her high office, and even a child had been made aware that he was to take other children. "I will be good," he repeated solemnly when told that one day he would be the Queen of England; and on another occasion when but six years of age, he said to a child

1501

[illegible]

ANXX

friend, "I may call you Jane, but you must not call me Victoria."<sup>1</sup> She was prepared for the future, and her cotton-wool upbringing did not destroy her charm, although the world—particularly that part of the world containing dangerous monsters who grew whiskers—was utterly hidden from her. Gay and plump she was as a girl-Queen, vivacious, an eager pupil for that delightful cynical politician, Lord Melbourne, who found the true retired rake's consolation in petting a growing girl with fatherly affection. In young Victoria there seemed then no hint of the solemn wife of German Albert.

In examining this coronation our position is reversed from the earlier ones. There, details had to be skimped because of small material, but here

<sup>1</sup> Similar stories are told of Princess Elizabeth, elder daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. On one occasion, when shopping with Queen Mary, it is said that the princess insisted all the time on hurry-hurry until her royal grandmother asked the reason. "Because there are lots of people outside to cheer me," answered the princess. She evidently gets delight from dropping her handkerchief and seeing women fight to possess it; and on one occasion she was noticed passing backwards and forwards in front of the sentry at one of the palaces, making him present arms every time she passed—and it was a particularly hot day! Then there was the time when, at the age of five, she was sent to "Coventry" for being rude to her governess; to teach her better behaviour, the governess would not answer next day when the little princess said "Good morning." "Good morning," said the princess three times, and when for the third time the governess remained silent, she cried, "It's royalty speaking!" Her father determined, however, to bring her up as democratic. It is natural that a child should be excited by our of royalty; years will teach her that royalty is only a few pleasures, as young Victoria rapidly discovered.



we have a plethora of accounts, and the thing is  
 in a way, written by a reporter of the 67. There  
 is a really some kind of coronation rehearsal  
 King George V and Queen Mary examined all  
 details very carefully—and Queen Victoria was  
 me anxious that everything should be correct.  
 "Pray tell me what I am to do," he asked. "For  
 they do not know."  
 Here is the *Gloucester* decription: "This morning  
 I was at the rehearsal of music for the coronation.  
 After passing through the dark passage, that  
 led to the interior of the Abbey, the mind is  
 appalled by the burst of splendour that breaks  
 upon the sight. The murky pile glitters on all sides  
 with crimson and gold. gallery above gallery  
 rising nearly to the roof. The old organ has been  
 cleared away, and in its place an orchestra is  
 erected for five hundred performers. Opposite to  
 this is the gallery for the House of Commons, in  
 which the stupendous columns of gold support  
 a spacious gallery at a terrible height. At the  
 bottom of a platform richly ornamented  
 stand a band of musicians, who give a grand  
 flourish on Her Majesty's entrance, and play  
 to *God Save the Queen*. In the centre of the four sides  
 formed by the cross on Peter's Corner, stands an  
 elevation of a pyramidal form, rounded by a key,  
 on which the coronation will be performed, here is  
 the old King Edward's chair covered with cloth of  
 gold. At the top are some 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

curiously figured, the use of which I could not understand. The crowd of desks in the orchestra are in the form of angels, on whose golden wings lie the crimson music-books surmounted by a golden organ aspiring to the roof. The whole appears like fairyland . . . What the appearance of the orchestra will be I must defer till Thursday, as all the instrumental performers are to be in scarlet and gold, the male voices in surplices, and the ladies robed in stiff muslin."

This female quire was an innovation, and a charming one.

From this coronation dates the revival of the state ride, but no longer through London. The city had degenerated almost entirely into a place of business, and besides, the streets are too narrow and winding for a modern procession. Queen Victoria drove—as will her descendant George VI—from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey. The route in 1937 will not be the same as in 1838, for Edward VIII had it altered to include Oxford Street and the vast sweep of Regent Street; Queen Victoria drove by Constitution Hill, down Piccadilly, St. James's Street, Pall Mall, Charing Cross, Whitehall, and Parliament Street.

Dressed in her royal robe of crimson velvet furred with ermine and bordered with gold lace, wearing the collars of the Order of the Garter, Thistle, Bath, and St. Patrick, with a circlet of gold around her smooth hair, young Queen Victoria entered the Abbey this summer morning of 1838 . . . and it is time that I surrendered the pen to

QUEEN VICTORIA RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT AT HER CORONATION  
June 27, 1838. (Color Plate.)







or more touching, but none at once so gorgeous and so impressive, in recollections, in actual sight, and in promise of what was to be."

So writes a great Englishman, but very often a foreigner sees with less biased eyes, and we are lucky that two acute foreign observers were present—the American ambassador, Mr. Rush, and a French lady, Madame Mohl.

"I was," writes Madame Mohl, "in Westminster Abbey yesterday from five in the morning to half-past four in the afternoon. I saw the Queen, who has a charming countenance, and all the dukes, and peers, and bishops, and archbishops, and all those people with crowns on their heads, and the peeresses all in diamonds and trains held up by pages; in short, I never saw such a number of grand folk, and when I saw Wellington I wept like a calf from tender emotion. The Queen had a train twelve yards long, carried by eight pretty young ladies dressed in white and without trains; they had wreaths of white roses on their heads, and their dresses were trimmed with white roses and green leaves. I never saw anything so pretty. They were followed by eight ladies-in-waiting, who carried nothing, but who had pale blue trains and plumes of white feathers on their heads. All the peeresses had long red trains; in short, trains played the principal part in the ceremony. The music was splendid, and the whole thing very amusing."

Mr. Rush, on the other hand, found it all more impressive than amusing, and his words rather echo Dean Stanley's: "The beautiful and almost



he lost his footing and rolled down. He sustained no damage, but when he stumbled, the Queen started forward as though to save him!"

This episode of Lord Rolle struck all observers. *The Gentleman's Magazine* records that "Her Majesty rose from her seat, extended her hand to him to kiss, and expressed a hope that his lordship was not hurt. This act of royal and gracious kindness was instantly felt and applauded by all the spectators, who loudly and zealously applauded." Another source tells us that at Rolle's fall the Queen's "first impulse was to rise, and, when afterward he came up again to do homage, she said, 'May I not get up and meet him?' and then rose from the throne and advanced one or two steps to prevent his coming up—an act of graciousness and kindness which made a great sensation. She sent in the evening to inquire after Lord Rolle." Mr. Rush adds an amusing detail: "It was feared, at first, that he had injured himself, and all eyes were riveted to the spot. In an instant a dozen arms and hands were extended to assist him to rise; conspicuous among the number being those of the youthful maiden Queen herself, who quickly rose to go towards him as by a feminine instinct, the latter triumphing, at such a moment over all the pageantry which surrounded her. When it was found that he was not hurt, a sprightly young lady—the daughter of a peer—in the box immediately adjoining that of the ambassadors and ministers was heard to say, 'Oh, it's nothing; it's only part of his tenure to play the "roll" at the coronation.'" "





It was the day before that fixed for coronation day, June 25, 1902. In the Abbey, amidst great scaffolding raised to hold eight thousand spectators, with everything draped in red and gold, the musicians were at rehearsal. Sir Frederick Bridge, Director of the Music, was listening intently to the voices and the instruments, nervous, troubled. Quiet recently, two ladies standing in the cloisters had argued about the merits of tune and conductor only to find that they were discussing the burring, buzzing, waspish bag of that abomination, the vacuum-cleaner. Sir Frederick had not been depressed by this criticism, he had only smiled: perhaps secretly he agreed with the ladies when, late at night, for the thousandth time, the tired voices echoed about him. But this night before the coronation he did not smile when, called from his work, he was told by Lord Esher: "I am very sorry, you must send your forces away; there will be no coronation to-morrow."

King Edward VII was ill. There had, of course, been rumours, but optimism in face of a national calamity grows very strong. The people could not believe that the coronation would be postponed even when told that Edward had been unable to

1902

*Edward the Seventh*

XXXXV



consolately at their bunting, and those who had let windows and balconies along the route gained melancholy satisfaction from the thought that visitors were hanging on in gloomy London longer than had been intended.

Not only the hotel-keepers, who would naturally lose hundreds of pounds, but all England waited in painful anxiety, reading the bulletins outside the Palace, seizing edition after edition of the newspapers. Quickly, however, the King recovered. An operation was necessary, but Edward was determined that the nation should lose as little as possible because his body had turned traitor.

Although by no means well, he performed the ceremony on August 9 of the same year, after a postponement of six weeks and two days.

This was the first coronation since Victoria's, over sixty years before, and officials were uncertain about the details. Besides, the delay had meant the recall of many foreign officials who had been unable to wait indefinitely. Sir Frederick Bridge tells of his anxiety and of the trouble he took to arrange the music. There had been women in Victoria's quire, there were none in his, and at first there was talk of curtailment, it being feared that the King might be too weak to undergo the full service. But Edward insisted that nothing should be altered. Sir Frederick decided to give examples of English coronation music from Merbecke and Tallis of the sixteenth century to his own generation. Orlando Gibbons (the threefold



On the theatre, carpeted with deep rich blue, the ancient ceremony was performed by Archbishop Temple. He was indeed old, and the fears of many were almost confirmed. He anointed the King on the head with his right thumb instead of the finger, and so shaking were his hands that Edward had to guide them during the crowning. And even then he put the crown on back-to-front. As the crown rested flashing upon the King's head, while electric lights flared in quire and theatre, while peers and peeresses crowned themselves—some of the peers being, in fact, rather hasty with their crowning. In the sudden silence as the exultant shouting died, far away could be heard the dulled thunder of cannon proclaiming to the world that Edward VII now was King.

The Archbishop was not the only feeble prelate in the Abbey, for we learn that Dean Bradley almost dropped the chalice. It was, however, when offering fealty, that the weakness of the Archbishop proved too much for his frail body. As the poetical Archbishop of Armagh puts it:

*We saw him in the abbey—now near fainting  
in pallor half sublime,  
until we thought God kept a great ensnaring  
for coronation time.*

Bodley describes the situation in more concrete phrases: "The archbishop having recited the formula of homage, added with deep emotion, 'God bless you, Sir'; and endeavoured to rise to kiss the King's cheek. But his strength failed, and



and would have pulled Edward down on top of him had he not been supported by the Bishop of Winchester and the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

Owing to the Archbishop's weakness, the beautiful Queen, contrary to precedent, was crowned, not by Canterbury, but by the Archbishop of York. Edward had been crowned seated, but the Queen knelt on a faldstool; Edward had been anointed on head, breast, and hands; the Queen was anointed on the head only. On her faldstool before the altar, between the steps and the King's chair, she knelt as the Archbishop poured the holy oil upon her heavy glittering hair. Then as she was crowned, Lee tells in his book on Edward how he was dazzled when the peeresses lifted their bright coronets, and "their white-gloved arms seemed to make a frame to every face, and the beautiful effect was remarked even in that day of striking scenes."

Alexandra rose from her faldstool and, supported by two bishops, walked up the theatre to her throne. Passing the King, she "bowed herself reverently to his majesty," and, holding his sceptre, Edward stood to his feet to receive his wife's gracious courtesy.

As King and Queen left the Abbey, the happy, proud notes of Wagner's *Kaiser-Marsch* echoed from the august walls, and concluded with the words specially written to the music by A. C.





GLANCING through a tall volume in the British Museum Reading Room with the title, *A Collection of Coronation Souvenirs*, one cannot help being struck by the diminution, not of loyalty, but of poetic felicity in the people's minds at a modern coronation. You will find no Udalls or Dekkers in this collection of odds and ends pasted into a thin large volume, you will find odes and lyrics, hymns and cracker-motto rimes with gaudy photographs with most unlikeliike colouring. Our modern poets, it seems, are more excited by the intricacies of thought than by the simple emotions of humanity; the loyalty of a people is nowadays expressed in turgid lines and banal ideas more suited to the magazine section of some very obscure provincial weekly. There is no echo here of the gay, spontaneous lyrics of the medieval, Tudor, and Stuart days; Troynovant indeed has fallen, that proud city. Yet loyalty has not diminished. In truth, it has grown as common poetry has declined. The poets who wrote the coronation odes of the past probably did them in some tavern and cursed the King because of the scurvy sums received; the verses in this *Collection* were not written for coin, they were written out of sheer excited loyalty. Is that the reason why they lack greatness?

1911

*George the Fifth*

LXXXVI



Flicking over these pages in the British Museum, evoking that day of Thursday, June 22, 1911, when King George V with Queen Mary rode in his gilded coach from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, one is apt to forget that in truth this was not such a gay coronation. It is foolish now to try to hide the fact that the accession of George V was not greeted with universal acclamation. That brilliant journalist, Stead, brought all scandals to light on pretence of demolishing them; those scandals had best remain buried for the lies they were, but all the same they reflect the attitude of a certain part of the people. King George was an unknown quantity; some doubted his moral ability to reign, others feared that he would be too staid after his gay father.

All this must be remembered, because now we can look back upon it with splendid disdain, being able to see the ideal reign that followed.

When King and Queen were driven from Buckingham Palace it was noticed that both were taken aback by the tumultuous welcome, that the King seemed almost dazed by this vociferous expression of loyalty. The Queen recovered herself first, then, quickly, the King regained his composure and answered the waving and shouting with royal bows and salutes.

In the Abbey, the ancient ceremony went without a hitch of any kind. The Queen, in a purple robe richly embroidered in gold with roses, shamrocks, and thistles above a dress of ivory satin embroidered with gold, was noticed occasion-





## CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND

outside Buckingham Palace a huge crowd waited until their new King came to the balcony, drawing his Queen after him by the hand. So tumultuous was the acclamation that soldiers on guard forgot all discipline, the officers even drew their swords and waved the naked blades flickering in the moonlight.

Thus began a reign that will always remain most honourably in the annals of England. The people's first doubts were soon dispelled, and through the ghastly war years the figure of their King kept courage and loyalty strong. It was his quiet dignity, his brave unflinching manner of facing actuality and never turning aside from the greatest of horrors, that gave such strength to England.

Now, after the tragic abdication of Edward VIII, his second son reaches our throne as George VI. Like his father, George VI was Duke of York, both were called unexpectedly to their high exhausting office, and both had the misfortune to follow brilliant and beloved Kings.

It is certainly not too much to believe that George VI will prove, as his father proved, that despite the misfortune of succeeding a most popular King, England is safest in the hands of an honest, painstaking, and courageous ruler.

We can well cry, as will the lucky ones in the Abbey when the crown rests upon the head of King George the Sixth,

God save the King!

Long live the King!

May the King live for ever!





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